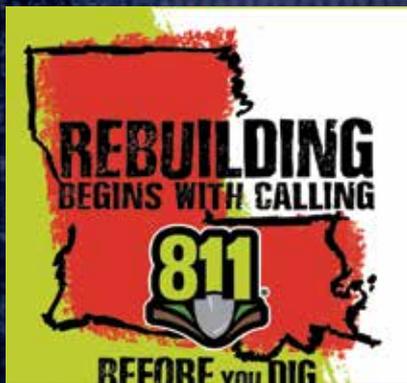


# Louisiana



2020 Issue 4

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





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  - Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
  - Louisiana Public Service Commission
  - PHMSA (DOT)
- Crimson Gulf's operations are monitored and controlled by a state-of-the-art control center 24 hours a day and seven days a week.
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from the desk of

# Brent Saltzman



**W**orking Together is the theme for this month's issue of our magazine. All I can say is, "Amen to that!"

In today's environment, with all the craziness surrounding this pandemic, effectively communicating with each other is paramount. I can't stress this enough to our hard-working contractors when contacting our call center. Providing accurate, detailed information to our operators is crucial to the entire ticketing process. The same goes to our safety-minded friends in the locating industry when communicating with those same contractors. Providing detailed information about the width of the underground facility or communicating that the excavator is "clear and there's no conflict" is vitally

important. Having an "us versus them" mentality gets us nowhere and can only lead down the path of destruction.

Louisiana 811 sincerely believes in working together with all of our stakeholders. We're not perfect by any means but listening intently to others and communicating clearly and concisely will only lead to building great relationships. It works for us and I can assure you it'll work for you!

In closing, I pray that all of you have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Please stay safe and, hopefully, I'll see you at the Louisiana Damage Prevention Summit in January!

Brent Saltzman  
Executive Director  
Louisiana 811

# Louisiana 811

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2020 Issue 4

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Roger Cox, Publisher

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**Louisiana 811**  
**Damage Prevention Summit**  
01/19/21 - 01/21/21  
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Baton Rouge  
[www.louisiana.damagepreventionsummit.com](http://www.louisiana.damagepreventionsummit.com)

**Louisiana Police Jury Association**  
Annual Convention  
02/10/21 - 02/12/21  
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[www.lpgov.org](http://www.lpgov.org)

**Louisiana Conference on Water Supply, Sewerage & Industrial Wastes**  
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03/15/21 - 03/19/21  
Kenner, LA  
[www.louisianaconference.org](http://www.louisianaconference.org)

**Louisiana Society of Professional Surveyors**  
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### **Operations Report**

*Incoming Calls:*

2019 thru Nov. – 664,426  
2020 thru Nov – 672,639

*Outgoing Notifications:*

2019 thru Nov – 3,182,056  
2020 thru Nov – 3,226,167

*Call Ratio (In to Out)*

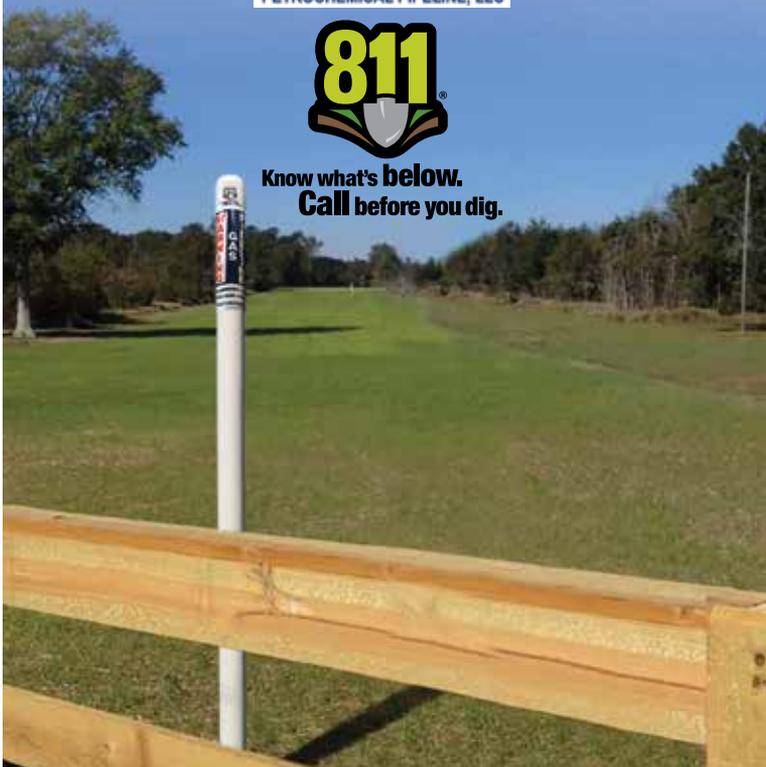
2019 thru Nov – 1:4.79  
2020 thru Nov – 1: 4.80

*On-Line Ticket Entry*

2019 thru Nov – 77.98 %  
2020 thru Nov – 79.32 %

### **New Members**

- Camex Operating Company
- Empire Midstream LLC
- Empower Resources, Inc.
- Liddieville Water System, Inc.
- Linde, Inc.
- Planet Resources Operating, LLC
- Springhill Community Water System
- Tensas Basin Levee District
- TG Natural Resources
- Village of Epps



# Teamwork is Essential

By Cole Vanderlick,  
Louisiana 811  
Damage Prevention Manager

This edition of Teamwork is exactly what Louisiana is all about. No matter the circumstance, Louisianians are always there to extend a helping hand to make it through together. It's how we were raised, and it's the right thing to do in life. Take care of your neighbor. Isn't life all about love anyway? How we treat each other is one of life's most important treasures. The entire country knows that you can count on Louisiana. We are the capital of Southern Hospitality. It's how we were raised to be since kids. No one is alone in our state. You are part of a special unity when you live in Louisiana. One that runs towards help, not away from it. We cannot predict when disasters will occur, but we have the choice on how we react. This world is as good as the people living in it. Maybe I'm biased, but I believe that Louisianians are just about as good of people as there are walking this earth. It's the attitude that we bring that is so uplifting. It's the casual friendliness that goes further than we can see. Some people here are devastated by the damages that they've had to face. I bet a kind word and a friendly conversation with a fellow Louisianian helped calm some of those frustrated nerves. I bet a helping hand brought a soothing attitude that made someone feel like they weren't alone, and that everything will be ok.

We have taken beatings from Mother Nature many times, and Louisiana always prevails together. 2020 has brought one of the worst hurricane seasons ever, during a year that has been anything but ordinary. Louisiana took hit after hit from these hurricanes. These caused some of the worst damages that Louisiana and our member companies have ever experienced. Unity represents Louisiana as much as it could represent any state. We expect to work as a team here. That's how we overcome. Our industry works together every day. Hard work and smart collaboration between companies proved to be critical for restoration efforts from these storms. Resources have been stretched thin during restoration efforts. Work has been needed all over. Companies have flooded impacted areas with emergency personnel. Employees have been running on fumes. Locators have been working hard to keep up with the volume of dig tickets to mark facilities. Companies have communicated together to handle this emergency crisis as safely and efficiently as possible. This hurricane season has been mayhem for many. Teamwork and communication have been the only way to make it through safely together. Downed power lines, telephone poles, busted water lines, blowing gas, damaged facilities; you name it, chances are that one of our member companies experienced it from hurricane damages. They had to safely and efficiently repair and restore services, while communicating with other utility companies to protect each other's facilities. Our member companies worked closely with each other and FEMA to help their communities as quickly and safely as possible.

We have been working with our member companies to help protect their facilities during restoration activity. We posted



**Help keep communities connected as we rebuild**

Always contact 811 before digging during clean-up from the storm to prevent accidental damage to utilities.

Call or visit 811.com or your state 811 center's website.



**REBUILDING BEGINS WITH CALLING**



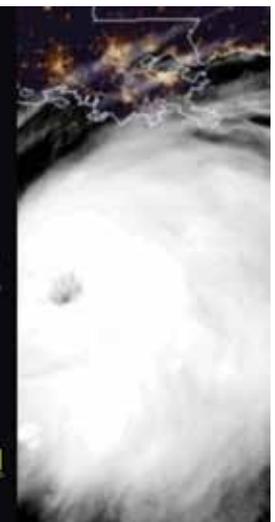
**BEFORE YOU DIG**

**FACILITY OWNERS, OPERATORS AND EXCAVATORS**

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<b>Inclement Weather</b> Inclement weather prohibits or impedes a worker's use of his locating equipment or causes undue risk to himself or his equipment such as lightning, heavy rain, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, dirt, snow, or flooding conditions.	<b>Extension</b> The mark by time shall be extended by a duration equal to the duration of the inclement weather. The owner or operator shall notify the excavator or demolisher before the expiration of the mark-by time of the need for each extension.
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**Use Caution**  
Flooding conditions may wash away utility marks or delay locators from performing their job.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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# Getting Back Up After Getting Knocked Down



*Recently, we talked with Molly Smith, Damage Prevention Manager for Louisiana/Mississippi for CenterPoint Energy about lessons learned from a busy hurricane season.*

As Molly was just settling in her new role as Damage Prevention Manager for the two states in the grips of COVID-19, her attention was about to be diverted in the form of three relentless and devastating hurricanes in an eight-week period of time beginning with a lady named Laura, followed by Delta and concluding with Zeta.

Laura made landfall near Lake Charles, Louisiana on August 27 as a strong Category 4 hurricane with 150+ mph winds. Needless to say, Laura caused considerable and catastrophic damage to businesses, homes and infrastructure. The damage was seen in the widespread roof and structural damage, downed trees, powerlines, and poles, as well as extensive flooding from the storm surge.

Molly said, "The scope of damage was staggering and reports of utility damage from downed poles and damaged gas facilities started coming in almost immediately. After the initial reports started coming



in, mostly from local fire departments, it was obvious that coordinating the utility restoration was going to be critical to our recovery efforts.”

We’ve all seen the mutual aid support that power companies have in place in times of disaster. It’s impressive to see convoys of electrical trucks, manpower and equipment coming to restore power grids in record time and often working around the clock to bring some sense of normalcy back to an affected area. It can be overwhelming to other utilities trying to stay up with the volume of work that must take place.

Molly continued, “From the time Laura hit the coast and through the next five weeks, there were about 4800 Entergy mutual aid workers working together to replace more than 11,000 downed poles without creating damages to other underground facilities.”

She then said, “It was apparent that there needed to be a plan to protect underground utility lines that could be in conflict. As the result of that mutual concern Entergy, AT&T and CenterPoint partnered with one another and with their locating partner USIC to develop and execute a plan with safety and damage prevention in mind. So it was determined that when the mutual aid workers arrived to rebuild the power grid, a locate ticket would be called in for each and every job. Line locators would then be dispatched to stay ahead of the mutual aid crews working on the pole replacement projects. This pro-active approach allowed the mutual aid crew to focus on their task at hand and at the same time protect our underground utility lines as well as those of other utilities in the area.”

Molly thought for a moment and said, “It has been a learning experience for sure. By working together, we were not only able to ensure the safety of the crews in the area, but at the same time, to protect the communities and neighborhoods we served.”

While USIC was committed to locating ahead of the mutual aid crews, CenterPoint’s employees were busy responding to damages to their own natural gas facilities from things such as uprooted trees, flying debris and collapsed houses.

Molly said, “For the first couple of days, in addition to our crews completing assessments to determine areas with damaged natural gas facilities, we were also receiving reports from fire departments as they responded to calls from concerned citizens. When the mutual aid crews arrived, they began to report damages to our natural gas facilities as well when they identified them on their project sites. One of the ways our Damage Prevention team jumped in to assist our local Operations group was to assist in calling in the emergency locate requests for our own crews to Louisiana 811.”

When asked how that went, she said, “The Louisiana 811 agents were absolutely amazing. They continued to answer the phone with grace and professionalism. They were kind and understanding of our situation. We were calling so often; they began asking us how we were doing. They certainly helped to make the process more bearable.”

Looking back over the immediate impact and subsequent restoration of services to customers in the area, Molly was asked about lessons learned that she could share with readers of the 811 Magazines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Locate Current: 13 mA  
Depth: 3 ft 2.13 in  
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# The way I See it

Louisiana 811

Cole Vanderlick  
Manager - Damage Prevention



I hope that each of you are doing well during this holiday season. 2020 has been a challenging year, but we have overcome a lot together.

Winter weather is unpredictable, so if you find yourself with more time on the computer, please visit our Louisiana 811 YouTube channel as a helpful resource. We offer a variety of educational videos and playlists on safety and online ticketing tutorials. If you are looking for something that can't be found on those videos, please let us know. As always, we are available for training.

Remember to call 811 or submit your dig ticket at Louisiana811.com at least 2 days, but not more than 5 days, excluding weekends and holidays, in advance of the commencement of any excavation or demolition activity. Dig tickets are valid for 20 calendar days, as long as the marks are visible. Be sure

to stay on top of your dig tickets while managing your projects, so that there is no lapse in coverage.

These winter months can be a great time to reach out to farmers, as this is the off-season for many. Whether farmers are ditch digging, sub soiling, ripping, plowing, or other farming operations, underground pipelines and utilities could be in danger. No matter the depth of excavation, 811 dig ticket must be submitted. The simplest way for farmers to submit dig tickets is online at Louisiana811.com. Providing exact locations for rural farm land is tough, so now you can easily map out the property of excavation with our user-friendly online portal.

Please let us know if we can do anything to help you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Let 2021 bring greatness to you all. 811

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

She said, "It would be best to already have a plan in place in advance of any disaster. Most of us think we already have a plan, but in the case of Laura, I'm not sure we were as prepared as we needed to be for the impact of a Category 4 hurricane, both in size and destruction. I think we needed to have a better awareness of the number of people we were going to have to interact with and just who all the players were. We had a joint utility after action review to discuss how everything went and what we could have done better. Perhaps we need to set up a mock drill from time to time to ensure the next time disaster strikes, all the players are on the same page from day 1 instead of day 5. We feel that we executed well on the plan we had in place at CenterPoint Energy, but from a global Damage Prevention view, there are always areas to improve and apply lessons learned from our industry partners."

Molly was then asked to share any final thoughts she might have about the restoration and clean up efforts. She

shared, "While we were able to protect our facilities with minimal underground damages during the power restoration efforts, the above ground damages



resulting from debris cleanup and home demolitions in the weeks following the storm are areas that we are working to improve our processes and education efforts around. Since these types of work are often considered "above-ground", there are few if any 811 tickets called in. Since no tickets are called in, we did not have a good grasp of the

locations where the clean up was to take place and as such, experienced damages to meters and above-ground facilities. This is a safety concern that has been identified and is part of our ongoing improvement review for our disaster response plan."

She concluded, "No matter what... routine work, large projects, or disaster recovery, we need to step back from what we're doing and realize that everything we do revolves about safety. Safety is our number one goal and that's not just a slogan. Everything we do each day is and has to be about safety. Damage Prevention is about safety of the public, our employees and our facilities. Accurately locating and safe digging is about safety. And the thread that makes it all work is effective communication."

You are exactly right, Molly. Talking to one another should never be a last resort, it should be the first action item on the list. Talking with one another makes it possible to work together and when we work together, we make things work better. 

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I then asked the utility contractor to explain the difference between a “good” project and a “bad” project.

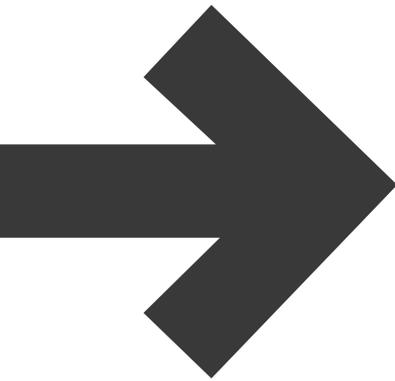
**T**his question has been asked by many locators and excavators, in many places and with different levels of frustration in their voices. “Why does this project have to be so aggravating?” The answer to the question always includes a reference to better communication. And we all agree that better communication is critical in the process.

However, the truth is we often don’t communicate well because of how we see one another in the field. Abraham Lincoln was quoted as saying, “I don’t like that man. I must get to know him better.” On any given project, there is of necessity the locator and the excavator. Too many times, I’ve seen this relationship as adversarial as opposed to collaborative. Both recognize they are part of a team, but few recognize that out in the field, they are on the same team.

The truth is everybody is on more than one team. We have a “family” team, our “coworker” team, “the folks we hang around with” team and then there is the “stakeholder” team. There are other teams of course, but you get my drift. Obviously, we don’t have the exact same things in common with each team

but clearly each team has something in common. One of the things we’ve learned is that we are not a team just because we work together at a place or on a project. We only become a team when we learn to trust each other. Respect and trust are the foundation of meaningful relationships and essential to the development of a successful team.

I once asked a long-time locator and an experienced utility contractor both known for their teamwork values. I asked the locator, “what makes for a successful project and/or a strong team?” He replied, “Two things come to mind almost immediately. Good communication on both sides and do what you say you’re going to do.” I asked him to explain just a bit and he followed up, “Projects that start with preconstruction meetings, update meetings during the project and on-site meetings, especially if there is a change in plans, almost always put both the excavator and locator at the right place at the right time. The locator needs to understand and respect the excavator’s plans and needs for the day. The excavator needs to understand and respect time constraints placed on the locator. If there is a conflict in time or resources both should have the ability to make the necessary adjustments to avoid frustration and damage.”



# TEAMWORK

*By Roger Cox  
ACTS Now, Inc.*

He continued, “When I say do what you say you’re going to do, I mean if a locator says he is going to mark the entire intersection by an agreed upon time, he needs to mark the entire intersection by that time and let the excavator know he did what he said he was going to do. If the excavator says he is digging one block on the west side of the street, that’s what he needs to do. Don’t push ahead of the locator, just do what you say you’re going to do. If you can’t do what you said you were going to do, for whatever reason, it needs to be communicated to the other side immediately. Avoid surprises which lead to failure.”

I then asked the utility contractor to explain the difference between a “good” project and a “bad” project. He said, “It’s the same difference between a ‘good’ team and a ‘bad’ team. It boils down to just good old fashion communication and documentation. If our crews are going to start a major project, before we touch a blade of grass, we want a preconstruction meeting. At that meeting, I’m going to identify the person that speaks for us on site. We want to discuss the do’s and don’ts for the project, exchange phone numbers and be ready to adapt on the fly. We tell our folks to call in work you

can get done within the life of the ticket and to use the information given.”

When asked what he needed from the locators involved in the project he said, “Oh, I don’t know. I guess I’d say make themselves available. The most successful projects we’ve been involved with over the years were because we could work with the locator, because he was able to work with us. We all have obstacles to overcome on these kinds of projects, so we must work together as a team to keep from having unnecessary conflict. The truth is it just makes sense to learn to work together because we know that it won’t be long before we’ll be working with these same guys on the next project. It makes sense to start off on the right foot.”

Both the excavator and locator find success when they learn the benefits of creating a team with a common goal. One that works well together, understands the strengths and the weaknesses of each team member. The value of such teamwork is that they become adept at identifying all aspects of the project and accept responsibility for updating one another.

This in a way is the essence of effective communication. As the article began, we always hear “we need

to communicate better.” Effective communication is the most important part of teamwork and almost never happens unless you see one another as being on your team instead of being your biggest problem. Of course, being a good communicator means being a good listener. Not only is listening a matter of courtesy and respect, it goes a long way in building the trust in one another necessary to be successful.

Clint Eastwood may have said it best, “A man has got to know his limitations.” A strong and effective team develops confidence in one another. By working together, they learn each other’s capabilities, then communicate their needs and find ways to keep one another working with minimal disruption. It’s through this process of communicating with each other, both become aware of what must be done, what can be done and commit to what will be done.

So how do we build that successful team? We already know the formula. Walt Disney said, “The way to get started is to stop talking about it and start doing it.” I expect that’s the same first step in the field too.

Your move! 🚧

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

informative messages to notify our industry that resources were stretched thin and recommended postponing excavation activity unless absolutely necessary during that time. We have saturated social media with storm cleanup information to help protect our community and members' facilities. With the help from Mississippi 811, we created post-storm debris cleanup signs to help protect our members' facilities from storm cleanup activity. The signs advise the community to not stack debris piles near pedestals, pipeline markers, hydrants, meters, and to call 811 before work begins. We distributed those signs to our members in affected parishes that requested them. While delivering those signs and other valuable resources to our members, it's evident how badly some areas are hurting. It's easily

recognizable throughout our state and on the faces of the people that we encountered. Destruction and sadness weigh down some of our communities.



A helping hand and a friendly attitude can be extremely impactful.

Catastrophes humble us. They make us realize what is important in life. How we treat each other is crucial. We

count on each other every day because we need each other. Our industry needs each other and holds each other accountable and responsible. Our industry is one of the most important in the world. Teamwork is essential. Our lives and community depend on teamwork. I am proud to live in Louisiana. I am proud of our people. We are together as one. I am proud to work in this industry. We have some of the most heartfelt people who truly care about protecting each other and providing vital resources to our community. We will overcome the obstacles in our way by working together. We have all been in a position where help was needed. We have also all been in a position where we could provide help. Our actions and the manner in which we perform those actions have a strong impact on others. They just could provide that bit of hope for someone in need.

Stay safe, Louisiana. Keep being hopeful and helpful. 



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# What's My Score?

By Joe Igel

**W**hen I first learned that this issue's theme was Teamwork, I was excited. There is so much out there, so much to say, so many important notions. However, that was quickly muted by how exactly to address the subject. Then, I remembered an event in my career that had been especially important to me.

I spent 35 years of my working life in construction, but I started as a secondary teacher and had the rare opportunity to go back and teach several classes while still working primarily in construction. During that time, I was teaching a class in which I had assigned a project where students, as a small group, would be required to research a topic, prepare and deliver a report in a panel discussion format. I decided and advised each group that whatever grade the group was awarded was the grade that each member of the group would also receive.

What came next surprised them all. I decided who was in each group and intentionally put together students of widely different work ethic. Those with a high work ethic panicked as they thought of their GPA slipping because

of my decision. And those at the other end of the spectrum thought they could relax and some or all the work would be done for them. I arrived at this decision from what I learned from business, namely that while individual excellence is important, it was of little value if the group, department, or "team" did not all profit from it, use it and all rise to the occasion and excel. And this "condition" is something that we have all probably seen many times. A great deal of education is all about this individual excellence, and transcripts, resumes extol the virtues of a student's GPA, service record, and so on. And I grant, these are important, but are not always a good indicator of business success after education is complete. And that was the rationale for my decision.

This procedure had been in place for less than a week before the first students started coming to me with their concerns. They were having trouble motivating their group members. Some were worried because they had overheard others expressing their concerns. I explained that they could motivate the others in their group, do the work for them or something else in between.

Unfortunately, these concerns became calls from home and ultimately, I was forced to change back to a more traditional format, blending an individual grade and a form of individual merit into a grade for this part of the project. But I still liked the idea and, while I have never had the chance to try it again, I believe that the student reaction would now be stronger, quicker, and more intense. And thus, the need for something like it that much more important.

Fortunately, there are some activities like sports and scouting that build the idea group success, that regardless of one individual's talent and abilities, it will not consistently make the group or team effort better. Our younger son was a soccer goalkeeper and I would frequently tell him that if he played a perfect game, he made the game winnable, but he himself did not win it. He, together with his team, could win it. It is thus my belief that we need to reevaluate the way we recognize individual achievement, and in a way that rewards those that work together for the benefit of all. 

*Mr. Igel recently retired as vice president of the George J. Igel & Co., Inc. after working there for more than 35 years.*

# Working Together

Brent Saltzman  
Executive Director  
Louisiana 811

# CROSSBORES

**W**orking together is the theme for this issue of our magazine, and I'm personally a strong proponent of doing just that! Recently, I had the opportunity to provide a safety presentation to the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of Louisiana (PHCC). I value our relationship with this organization and I feel confident that this group of folks feels likewise.

As I typically do when speaking to the plumbers in the audience, I bring up the issue of cross bore awareness. For those of you readers who aren't familiar with this term, it essentially refers to the unintentional drilling of a new underground utility/facility through an existing underground utility/facility. This results in an intersection of the utilities, compromising the integrity of either or both utilities or underground structures. Unfortunately, this occurs more frequently than you would imagine, and in some instances, can be extremely dangerous and sometimes fatal.

The most common occurrence happens when directional drilling in a service line to a customer's home and a sewer line is compromised. Unbeknownst to the operator of the bore rig, the sewer pipe is bored through, ultimately resulting in a clogged sewer. The clog may not occur immediately but it'll eventually happen, sometimes months or even years later. If the service line happens to be a natural gas pipeline or an electric line, well, the situation becomes a real problem.

Educating plumbers on this issue is paramount to the safety of not only plumbers but homeowners and the community. We, along with many of our member companies, want plumbers to know that if they unknowingly strike a gas line while cutting through a sewerage blockage with a rotary device, it can result in natural gas entering the sewer system and migrating into a home. Needless to say, this can create a very dangerous situation. But what if it's an electric line causing the blockage? You guessed it – the plumber could be electrocuted!

All of this leads to my original point – working well together is paramount. Our message to plumbers is to highly encourage them to call in an emergency locate request when a cross bore is suspected. Don't attempt to clear the blockage and ask for assistance from the utility owners that may be involved. Furthermore, if you suspect or smell a gas leak, do the following:

- Leave and instruct others to leave the area immediately
- Call 911
- Contact the gas company
- Do not operate any power equipment
- Eliminate potential ignition sources
- Do not tamper with gas lines, meters, valves, etc.

Working well together, having open lines of communication and digging safely are all things we like to promote at Louisiana 811. Our hope is that all of our stakeholders do likewise because at the end of the day, our life may depend on it! 

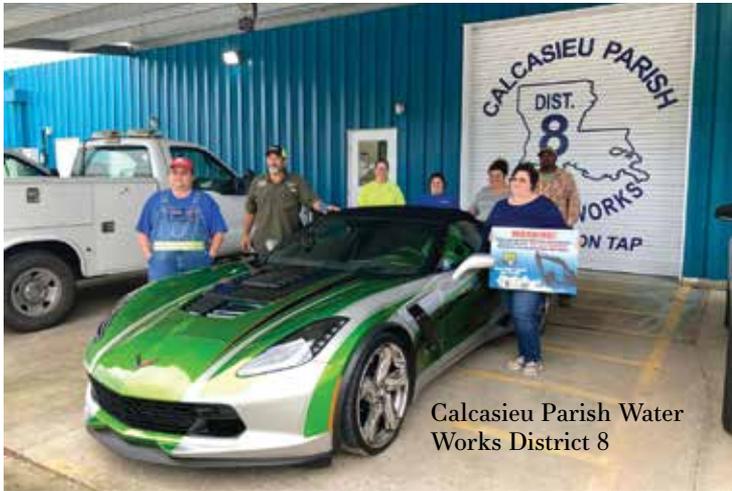
# **DON'T ignore me.**

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.

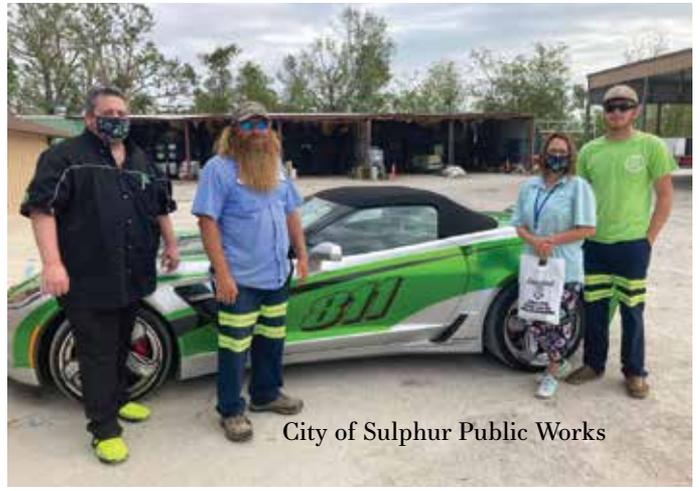


**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**





Calcasieu Parish Water Works District 8



City of Sulphur Public Works



Cameron Communications



Southern Electric Corporation

## Members working together to clean up safely after the storms.



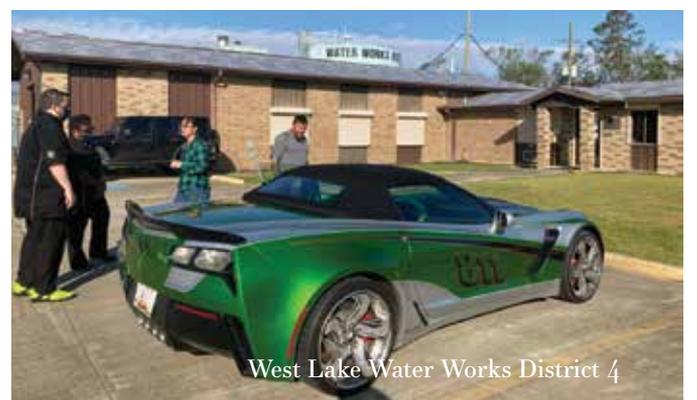
Cameron Parish Water District 9



Houston River Water Works



City of Lake Charles Water Dept.



West Lake Water Works District 4

# Stronger Together: One Call Concepts and Louisiana 811 Thrive Under COVID-19

**S**afety is the number one priority for the damage prevention industry at large, and also for the many one call notification centers operated by One Call Concepts, Inc. (OCC).

Due to the effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic, OCC actively worked to ensure notification center services remained unaffected. Keeping employees connected is no small feat under ordinary circumstances, and if there was ever a company built to handle dramatic change, it's OCC.

The pandemic acted as a catalyst for many companies' digital transformations, especially when it came to collaboration, and collaboration is inherent in OCC's structure. In early March, the company issued a stay-at-home order for all nonessential personnel. OCC took necessary precautions to preserve the safety and

well-being of its remaining office-based staff while encouraging member utilities, locators and contractors to file locate requests online via OCC's NextGen software as often as possible.

As construction season unfolded in the spring, online ticket submissions continued to rise. Moving traffic online was a crucial step in streamlining processes that came with the added benefit of taking some of the pressure off of call centers.

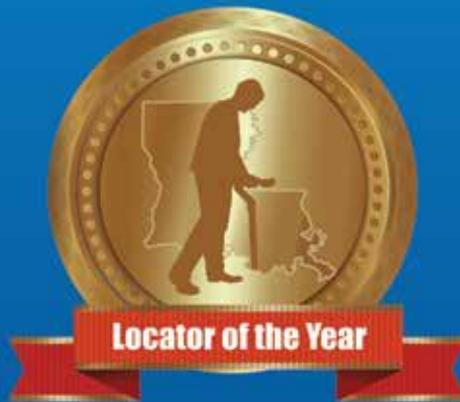
Every notification center is equipped to handle tickets from any state in which OCC operates. OCC's vast redundancy network also includes an overflow office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, called the North American Support Center (NASC).

The NASC uses a hybrid staffing model of both office-based and telecommuter staff to provide maximum coverage in

case of emergencies, such as inclement weather. Telecommuters can provide ready support within minutes of being notified of an urgent situation from any of OCC's call centers. These changes allowed for a seamless shift in procedures without an interruption of services.

Louisiana 811 (LA811), the notification center for the state of Louisiana, effortlessly made its transition during the lockdown. LA811 was able to shift to remote operations without missing a beat thanks to the careful planning and forethought of OCC.

Since 1982, One Call Concepts, Inc. provides end-to-end call center management and software to its notification centers. OCC is pleased to put its collective strength to work on behalf of the members of the 18 notification centers it serves throughout the United States. 



## Louisiana Locator of the Year Award

ENTRY DEADLINE – December 28, 2020

Nominations are now being accepted for the Locator of the Year (LOY) Award!

Excavators and member utilities, this is your chance to recognize a locator who has done an excellent job for you. Tell us why your nominee is the best of the best! Simply complete a nomination form below and we'll take care of the rest.

**NOTE:** Nominations must come from a member utility company or an excavator that has worked with a locator.

Nominating someone from within your company will be allowed and prior winners are not eligible.

Only one entry allowed per person and you cannot nominate yourself.

[www.locatoroftheyear.com](http://www.locatoroftheyear.com)

# FACT:

## Some People Are Accident Prone

By Larry Cole, Ph.D.  
TeamMax



**C**an you and I be psychologically accident prone?

I raised this question while reading an article in which the author discussed being accident prone attributed to physical characteristics of the workplace environment.

Let me answer the question I posed. YES! A person may be psychologically accident prone and before explaining that consider the fact you and I are what we think about. What is happening in our brains virtually control our physical and psychological lives. Our thoughts determine who we are.

The attitude that if I didn't have bad luck I would have no luck at all is, unfortunately, the default position of too many people. Without going into detail, I've got a relative with that attitude and fortunately he's not working in a safety sensitive environment. His default attitude has left a trail of misfortunes in his life.

Another factor to consider is both the conscious and unconscious mind. I don't have to walk around all day consciously expecting bad things to happen to me, because that default pattern is stored in the unconscious mind which works 24/7 below the level of our awareness. So the attitude resting in my unconscious mind is continuously impacting what I see and do.

A self-defeating attitude probably stems from a low level of self-esteem and/or self-confidence. Yes, these two psychological entities are different — self-esteem is the degree a person likes the monkey who looks back at them in a mirror and self-confidence is the "I can" attitude. Self-esteem has been characterized as the most sensitive part of our psychological makeup.

Here comes the kicker. Let's assume I'm the owner of this self-defeating attitude while working in a safety sensitive environment. First, expecting something bad to happen actually increases the likelihood of it happening; this is often referred to the Law of Expectation or the Pygmalion effect.

Quantum physics tell us that everything in the universe is connected through energy created by

giving off atoms and that is as far as my knowledge of quantum physics allows me to go. (If you want to learn more about this fascinating subject read the Divine Matrix by Gregg Braden.) So the notion is having the thought that “bad things happen to me” places that thought in the universe. Just like the ripples in a pond expand when I throw a pebble into the water, some of the ripples return to me. Hence, if I walk around the job site with this self-defeating attitude then I’m participating in a process to get hurt. That’s like shooting yourself in the foot before running a race.

Second, so I’m walking around the workplace with my self-defeating attitude expecting bad things to happen to me. That attitude may prevent me from seeing the hammer lying in the pathway until I step on it resulting in a badly sprained ankle. With my default attitude of expecting bad things to happen constantly working in the background I inadvertently forget a couple safety steps creating an incident (hopefully no one gets hurt).

Manifestation is another term used to explain how our thoughts create our

reality. I’ve got a business associate that believes he is one of the luckiest people in the world. He developed this attitude as he started his career. He can cite a litany of good luck events, including being an award winning performer, which he attributes to his life-long attitude of being lucky. The point being made is that our psychological make-up can also create positive events in our lives— even working safely.

So let’s conclude that I’m guilty. Am I stuck with this self-defeating attitude for the rest of my life? Sometime in our learning history we acquired the attitude leading to being accident prone, thus we can “unlearn” it and replace it with a new attitude. Creating this paradigm shift requires self-discipline and hard work to:

1. Become aware of the negative attitude.
2. Tell yourself to “stop & think.”
3. Immediately ask yourself, “Do I want to make a good or bad choice?” Obviously you want to make a good choice.

4. Now focus on the new thought of expecting good things to happen or being lucky.

At first you feel as if you’re lying to yourself and being fraudulent. Now is the time to take advantage of another truism — fake it until you make it. Keep practicing it because your unconscious brain doesn’t know the difference between fact and fiction. If you consciously think it, the unconscious mind believes it and stores it. With practice your new thought acquires strength and eventually overrides the old default pattern. Realize that an old habit doesn’t go away; it is simply over shadowed by a new way of thinking.

Exert the necessary self-discipline to continuously practice this new thought and you will notice that your world changes as your thinking changes. 📖

*Larry Cole, Ph.D., is founder of TeamMax a consulting company that helps people work together. Please send questions and/or comments to Larry at [teammx100@gmail.com](mailto:teammx100@gmail.com).*

*We've been successful helping folks get their message to excavators for more than a decade.*

# 811 MAGAZINES

83.5% of our readers are excavators.

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

by John Jacobi

## Teamwork

**L**et's start with a couple of definitions: A team is more than one person. Teamwork is a team (more than one person) working to achieve a goal. Everyone is a member of many, many Teams unless they are stranded alone on a desert island with no communication to the outside world. Every group someone is associated with – family, employer, church, school, neighborhood, city, town, club, athletic team – is at least one team and may include many teams. The Team I am talking about here is the team that needs to do something physical that may involve one or more hazards to any member of the Team.

Everyone has at least one agenda and most people have many agendas depending on the situation. Some people just want a paycheck. Some people are ambitious and want to “get ahead.” Some people seek personal recognition. Personal agendas vary depending on the situation (work, home or other teams) and everything else that is going on in each person's life. Agendas typically change over time.

My last article included the following: “What does all this have to do with safety? Just this – accidents happen to everyone. Murphy was an optimist. If something can go wrong, sooner or later it WILL go wrong. If you think before you act (develop a plan), and then ‘work

the plan,’ you stand a lot better chance of getting home in one piece.” My basic thesis is the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

Planning is critical. What will it take to get the job done? What tools are available? What are the conditions at the site? What will the weather be like? What PPE is necessary? How much time is available? Will heavy equipment be required? The list is endless. Good planning is a MUST!! That said, a plan is just a plan. Things happen. Plans change. The Team has to be flexible to deal with unanticipated situations safely. Stop and re-group if necessary.

It is usually a good idea to have a well-qualified member of the Team that will be performing the work (the team I am focused on in this article) do the planning or, at least support the team that does the planning to make sure something significant is not missed. Do you know how a 1st Lieutenant (a young, inexperienced commissioned officer) raises a flagpole if he or she is smart? He or she simply orders his or her sergeant (typically an experienced, non-commissioned officer that has earned his or her stripes in the school of hard knocks) to raise the flagpole and then gets out of the way. A good sergeant is indispensable to planning

the job and to getting the job done.

This brings me to leadership. Every team has a leader. The leader may be designated (perhaps a 1st lieutenant?) or undesignated (perhaps a sergeant?) and they may not be the same person, but there will be a leader. Choose your leaders carefully. Good leaders are worth their weight in gold. Poor leaders can be dangerous!! The members of the Team must deal with poor leaders and look out for each other and for the Team. Some people are natural leaders and some people have to work to become good leaders – but EVERYONE on the Team has to do their part to get the job done safely. If one member of the Team looks good, the whole Team looks good. If one member of the Team looks bad, the whole team looks bad. The name of the game is to make the whole team look good. NOBODY gets hurt and EVERYONE goes home safely every night. Every member of the Team should “have the back” of every other member of the Team.

Good luck with Murphy and STAY HEALTHY!! 🧑‍🚒

*John Jacobi retired from PHMSA.  
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