

Louisiana



2021 Issue 1

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



This issue is dedicated to
Pipeline Safety



HEY YOU

with the backhoe!

Listen up. Don't even think about digging until you call 811. Then Atmos Energy will put my pals and me in the ground to mark utility lines. That way, you'll dig up only dirt...and maybe a few rocks...and rusty bottle caps...but not a natural gas line.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.



from the desk of

Brent Saltzman



It appears we can see the proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel” regarding the pandemic that has certainly impacted us all. Although we’ll never forget this historic event, I think it’s time to start looking ahead to our future. As we ponder what that may look like, I can tell you legislatively that potentially several things may be in store that will impact all of us in our industry.

The legislature convenes on Monday, April 12, 2021 and more than likely there will be two bills proposed that could become the latest amendments to the Louisiana Underground Utilities & Facilities Damage Prevention Law (commonly referred to as The Dig Law). First, white lining & positive response language have been discussed for years and will finally be brought before the legislature. Second, it is probable there will be proposed legislation lending an exemption for commercial agricultural farmers.

The white lining language will require excavators to use white paint and/or flags in the area of proposed excavation. If an excavator enters their locate request online, this will suffice as “virtual white lining” and physical white lining will not be required. Positive response will be tied to this language requiring owner/operators to positively respond by the mark-by time on locate requests. The appropriate actions allowed are either marking their underground utilities/ facilities or contacting the excavator and advising the area is “clear” indicating they don’t have any infrastructure in the area of proposed excavation.

The agriculture exemption language, as of this writing, hasn’t been finalized but will essentially eliminate the mandate for commercial agricultural farmers to have a valid locate requests when working outside a utility servitude or pipeline right-of-way. Furthermore, when working within these areas mentioned above, there may be a depth exemption. As the Dig Law is currently written, farmers are essentially breaking the law every time they drop a plow in the ground or conducting any other normal farming operation.

It goes without saying but this legislative session will be an active one as it relates to excavation activity. If you would like to see a change to Louisiana’s Dig Law, please reach out to us to be included in the email invitation to attend the next Dig Law Advisory Committee Meeting. They are open to anyone.

Until next time, please stay safe!

Brent Saltzman
Executive Director
Louisiana 811

Louisiana 811

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Louisiana 811

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Louisiana Conference on Water Supply, Sewerage and Industrial Wastes

Conference

04/5/21 - 04/8/21

Pontchartrain Convention & Civic Center, Kenner, LA

Louisiana Ground Water Association

Convention

04/12/21 - 04/13/21

Paragon Casino, Marksville, LA

Louisiana Society of Professional Surveyors

Annual Convention

04/14/21 - 04/16/21

Margaritaville Resort Casino, Bossier City, LA or Virtual

Louisiana Engineering Society

Conference

04/27/21 - 04/28/21

Cajun Dome, Lafayette, LA

Police Jury Association of Louisiana

Convention

05/12/21 - 05/14/21

Crowne Plaza, Baton Rouge, LA

Operations Report

Incoming Calls:

2020 thru Feb. – 108,111

2021 thru Feb. – 113,766

Outgoing Notifications:

2020 thru Feb. – 523,770

2021 thru Feb. – 545,749

Call Ratio (In to Out)

2020 thru Feb. – 1: 4.84

2021 thru Feb. – 1: 4.80

On-Line Ticket Entry

2020 thru Feb. – 81.59 %

2021 thru Feb. – 82.41 %

New Members

Activa Resources, LLC

Breton Sound Gathering, LLC

Curlew Midstream, LLC

Fontainebleau Operating, LLC

Fran Oil Inc.

Hudson & Gaar's Mill Water System, Inc.

Jenkins Community Water System Inc.

Neilco

NuGulf Operating, LLC

Pine Wave Energy Partners, OP

Plantation Pipeline - A Kinder Morgan Company

Products SE Pipe Line Corporation (name changed from R&B Oil Co, LLC)

Star Gathering, LLC

The Southern Louisiana Exploration Company LLC

TransCameron Operations, LLC

Using Subsurface Utility Engineering Wisely

SUE can be costly, but good communication can help to reduce the price tag.

By Michael Downes
811 Magazines



How well do you know SUE? No, not your mother's best friend, but the project manager's best friend for the last 30 years—subsurface utility engineering.

The main goal of SUE is to define a standard of mapping for existing underground utilities, with quality levels ranging from "A," which is the most accurate, but also the most time consuming and costly, to "D," which is the most basic.

The traditional approach to SUE requires an entire job to be located at the same class level of accuracy—which is necessary when major excavations will take place in crowded rights-of-way but might not be necessary on the margins of the project where no digging will take place.

But over the last few years, engineers have been approaching SUE more wisely, saving money and time while still providing accurate facility locations where it's critical.

The SJB Group in Baton Rouge, said many project designers, engineers and construction companies are now using "selective" SUE, a way to divide a project into different sections and pin down utility locations only as accurate as is necessary for each portion of a project.

"The biggest issue is people see the price of SUE and get scared away because they aren't thinking about the long-term project, they're thinking

about the immediate design and the costs associated with it," SBJ Group said.

"One of the things we are trying to do is reduce the cost of the initial SUE investigation, provide engineers with the information they need and do it at a more reasonable price by not having the full quality level through the entire project."

The example he used to highlight the benefits of selective SUE is a hypothetical highway expansion project, where the median is being converted into traffic lanes, but where the shoulder and land beyond will not be disturbed.

"The way it's been done in the past, everybody got the project limits and said, 'OK we need quality level B throughout the entire thing.' Well, if it's a roadway widening project where they're just tearing up an existing median and covering that up with pavement, you don't need great utility information outside of the existing roadway, since no construction is going to be done there, because you're not going to be doing any digging," SBJ Group said.

Since the majority of utilities would be located outside of the digging area, just eliminating that portion of the SUE work and focusing on where the construction is going to be done, you can save time and money, still get the utility information you need to design a successful project, and catch the benefits of using SUE.

The SBJ Group recommends a conversation about the necessity of SUE quality levels be discussed before every project.

"For us to provide the best information at the best cost, we need to know what the purpose of the project is. What needs to happen in the initial conversation, which has been in the [SUE] Standard of Care since it came out in 2002, is to have the discussion between the engineer and the project owner to determine what's the best route to provide utility information," SBJ Group said.

Looking at each project in-depth before the design phase helps to eliminate unnecessary costs and revisions and reviewing the SUE plan prior to starting the investigation is the first step. Since each project is different, there's not a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing SUE.

"There are some projects where you need it all. You need every bit of utility information you can get throughout the entire project," SBJ Group said. "But once again, there are some where you can alleviate some of those costs. The conversation needs to be initiated by one or the other—the owner or the SUE engineer—if not both."

The SUE quality levels involve different steps to ensure precise location information where it's critical and cost savings where more general information about utility locations is sufficient.

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Always call
811 before
you dig.

And if you suspect a gas leak, call
1-800-ENTERGY (368-3749) or **911**.

At Entergy, safety is our
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WE POWER LIFESM

New Louisiana 811 Board Member



Wes Hawley

I began my career with Atmos Energy in 2002 as a meter reader in Metairie. After working in Metairie for 2 years, my wife and I moved to Raceland where I would work in the Houma/Thibodaux area in the service department and performing line locates. During my time in Thibodaux, I became highly involved in Atmos Energy's Louisiana Division Safety Team and would earn my Certified Occupational Safety Specialist certification from LSU. In 2010 I became a Safety Specialist for the Louisiana Division. In 2014 I was promoted to Operations Supervisor for the River Parishes area including our Thibodaux office. My area of responsibility would include Meter Reading, Service and Damage Prevention. In 2018 I was promoted to Operations Manager for the Eastern Region of the Louisiana Division (Jefferson Parish, St. Bernard, North Shore, Hammond, Prairieville, Thibodaux, and the River Parishes) responsible for Service and Compliance activities. During this time, I would complete my bachelor's degree in Business Administration/Marketing from Columbia Southern University. In August 2020 I was promoted to Vice President Marketing for the Louisiana Division where I office in Baton Rouge. My wife Tabatha and I, sons Cameron (11) and Conner (8) and our Boxer Beaux relocated from Westwego and now reside in Dutchtown where we are really enjoying the area. We love the outdoors and spend our free time camping, fishing, hunting, and following our children's sporting or scouting activities. I joined the Louisiana 811 Board of Directors in December of 2020 and look forward to serving in this capacity and making a difference in damage prevention for the state of Louisiana. 

Quality Level A is commonly known as “daylighting” or “potholing,” and usually involves exposing the underground facility with safer digging techniques like vacuum excavation. The locator gets a precise visual location of the utility including type, size, depth, material, as well as the lateral location. But potholing can be costly and time consuming, as the utility must be exposed every so many feet in order to maintain accuracy.

While that standard is critical for a project that requires digging in a crowded right of way, it might be overkill for a project where the excavation will take place hundreds of feet away from known utilities. That’s where selective SUE comes in handy.


In contrast, the second lowest standard is Level C, where surveying above ground facilities in the field, like manhole covers or fire hydrants, in conjunction with existing utility records, provides general information about the location of utilities—but where the precise depth and horizontal location are not necessary.



There are times when all four levels play an important part in providing the most accurate information at the lowest cost.

When the final project maps are assembled, each utility shown has a note, indicating which level of accuracy was used to identify its location.

So, regardless of what quality level was used in the planning stage, excavators are aware of how accurate the utility information is.

Most importantly, even though an excavator is presented with very detailed plans, every job requires a ticket to be submitted to the 811 call center at least 48 hours prior to digging. There’s no telling what may have changed between the design phase and excavation. It’s not just a good idea, it’s the law. 



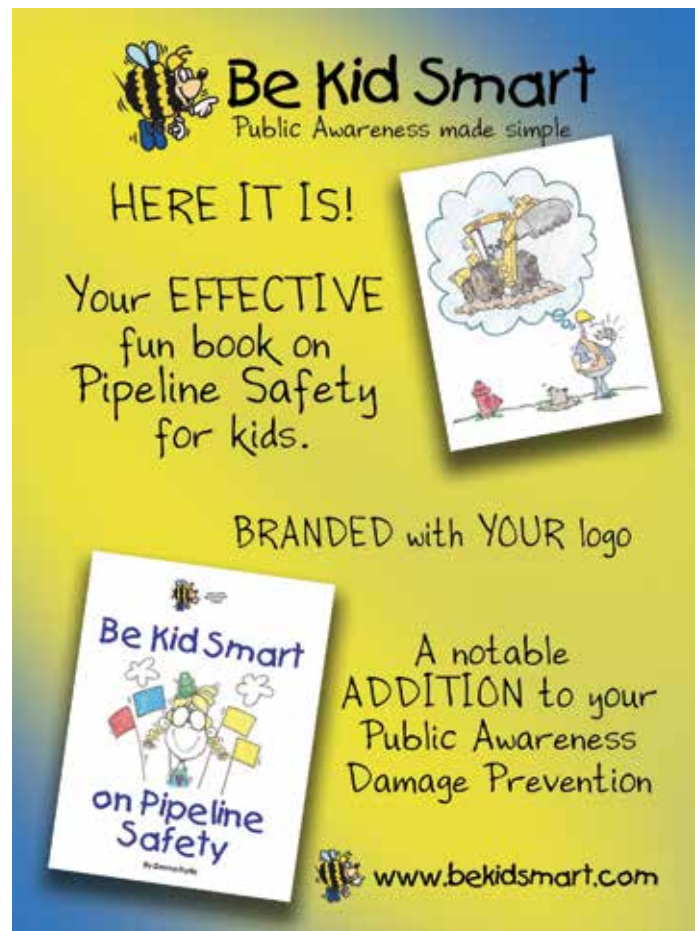
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The way I See it

Louisiana 811



Cole Vanderlick
Manager - Damage Prevention

I hope everyone is having a great start to the year. I know the winter storm was chaotic, but hopefully everyone has recovered nicely and is prospering as the weather has now gotten into our comfort zone. 2021 started with a very exciting Damage Prevention Summit, filled with learning and networking. The Locate Rodeo was the highlight of day one at the Summit. We greatly appreciate everyone's participation and encourage locators who have never attended to participate

next year. Colton Casanova of USIC earned the honors of Overall Grand Champion, placing first in the Telecom, Water and "Locate from Hell" events.

The 2020 Louisiana Locator of the Year Award was received on day two of the Summit by a large member company and a contract locator. The recipient for large member company was James Baum of Atmos Energy. The recipient for contract locator was Korey White of USIC. The committee received

Locate Rodeo & Locator of the Year Awards



Colton Casanova, USIC (center) receives the Locate Rodeo Overall Grand Champion award.



Brent Saltzman presents the 2020 Locator of the Year award, contract locator division, to Korey White, USIC.



Brent Saltzman presents the 2020 Locator of the Year award, large company division, to James Baum, Atmos Energy.

great nominations, but these two really stood out for their incredible work and large volume, while maintaining zero at-fault accidents and zero safety violations. Locators have one of the most important and difficult jobs in our industry. We sincerely appreciate all locators, especially these two, for going above and beyond in promoting damage prevention, public awareness and safety.

The Vic Weston Damage Prevention Champion Award capped off the Summit in day three, presented to Louisiana State Senator Mike Fési. This annual award is received by an individual who has demonstrated a lifetime commitment to damage prevention and safety. Senator Fési created Kid Energy USA, where Burnie and Earl, natural gas flame and oil drop characters, educate youth regarding 811, safe digging, utility awareness and more. Senator Fési and Vic Weston are incredible pioneers for damage prevention!

One of the most impactful moments from the Damage Prevention Summit was a keynote speech by Eric Giguere, Safety Awareness

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Louisiana State Senator, Mike Fési (left) receives the Vic Weston Damage Prevention Champion Award from Vic Weston.

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Record #12	
Date:	07/01/2020
Time:	08:23 AM (GMT-0700)
Frequency (Hz):	8.182 Hz
Locate Current Director:	N/A
Locate Current:	13 mA
Depth:	3 ft 2.13 in
Latitude:	37.3792164
Longitude:	-121.9874179

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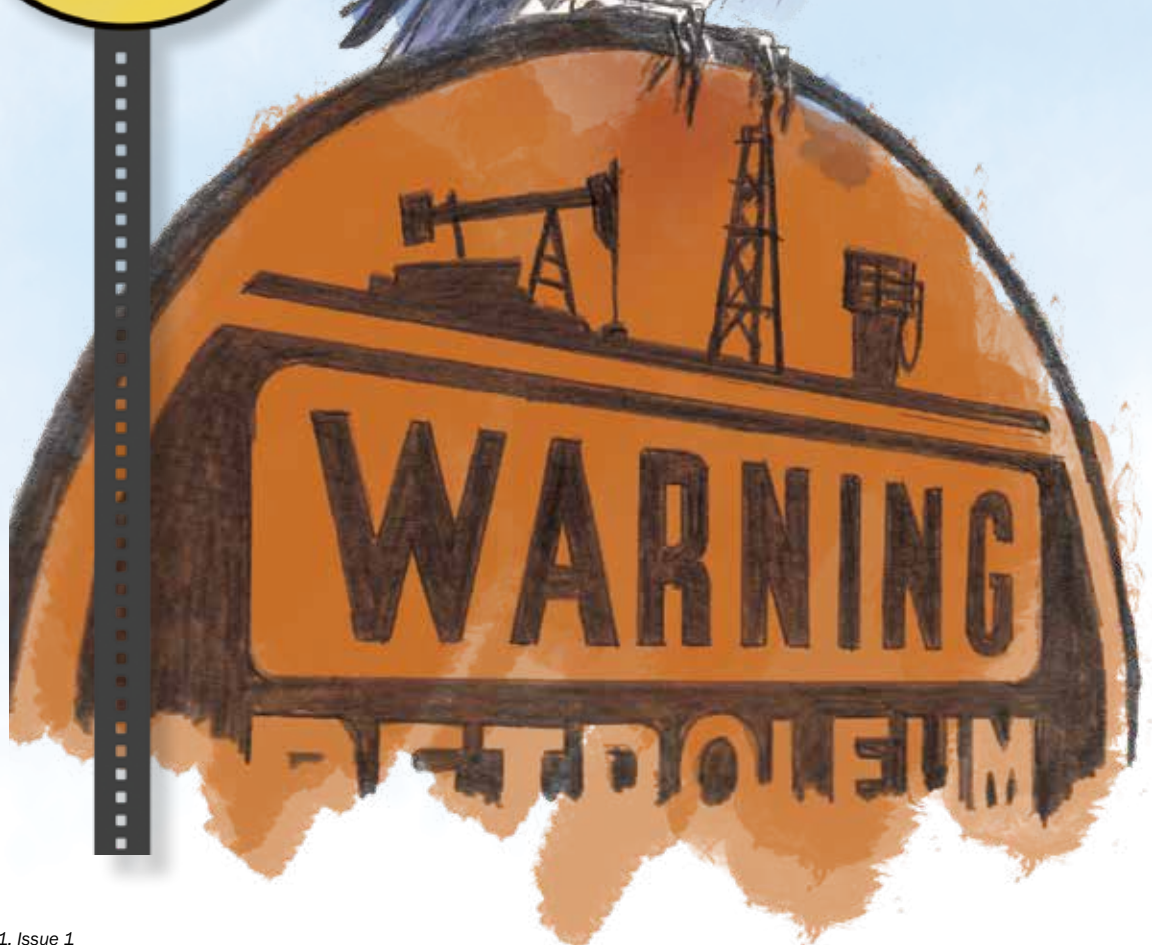
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and highways would
be overrun with trucks
trying to meet this
demand.*



t Neighbor

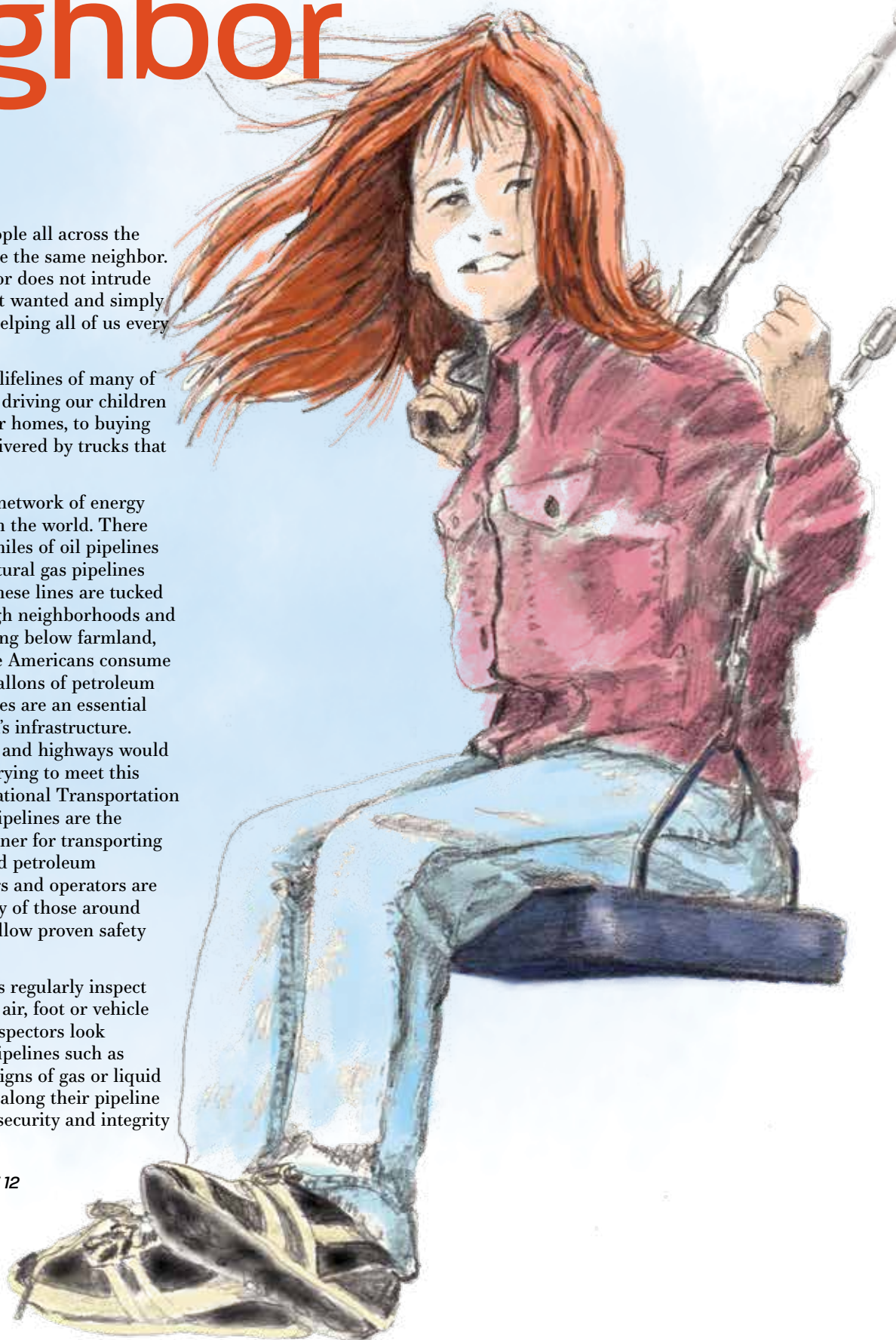
Millions of people all across the country share the same neighbor. This neighbor does not intrude where it's not wanted and simply goes about its business helping all of us every day.

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 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.

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.

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



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.

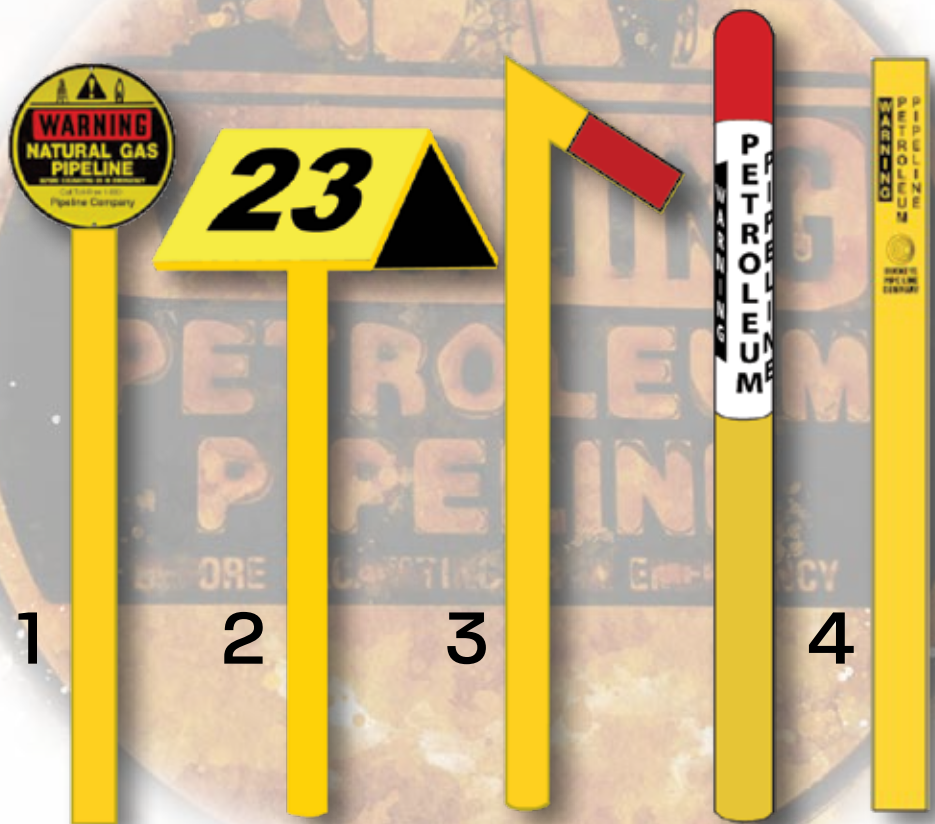
For your safety, pipelines are marked by above ground signs to provide an indication of their presence, approximate location, material carried and the name and contact information of the company that operates the pipeline. Markers may be anywhere along the right-of-way (a strip of land usually about 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.

How you tell where a pipeline is *located*

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



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.

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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.

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. 



Don't make a dig mistake

As an excavator, you have projects to complete and deadlines to meet. But when it comes to working around buried utilities, there's always time to dig safe. One wrong move can lead to a cut utility line and that means costly project delays, fines and the potential for serious injuries.

At CenterPoint Energy, we're committed to being your safe digging partner. That's why we offer no-cost excavation safety training. Our training covers state and federal regulations, identification of underground facilities and excavation safety best practices, all so you can finish your work safely and on time.

To schedule your training session, email PublicAwareness@CenterPointEnergy.com.



Adjusting

BEHAVIOR?



By Joe Igel

As I have mentioned in prior articles, I have been privileged to participate in discussions involving the revision of and updating of the State of Ohio's dig laws, discussions which led to two revisions/improvements and one which is still underway. I am also privileged to sit on the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's Underground Technical Committee (UTC), which is charged with reviewing complaints, in accordance with those laws, and determining action needed to be taken to change behaviors and prevent repeats. I should stress here that we are not a court of law and that our decisions, while not related to guilt or innocence, can be enforced.

We initially, based upon the facts as submitted to us, determine if there indeed was a compliance failure. When we find that compliance failure, we always try to ascertain the rationale behind it. We look at the written response and support offered. In a past article, I wrote that we work hard to maintain perspective, not to punish but to educate. While we can all bear witness to behavior, we cannot determine intent, only make assumptions about it.

As a retired safety officer, I always seek the "root cause" that gave rise to the incident. In my experience on the UTC, I have found several causes.

First and foremost, it is a lack of information, or a lack of understanding of that information that gives rise to a significant percentage of the complaints.

While extensive promotion of the need to notify before digging is present, many parties:

1. are unaware what constitutes excavation
2. what are considered safe procedures when excavating near a marked existing utility
3. what to do if one is struck
4. and despite it being clearly defined, how long to wait for markings.


Our traditional response to correct this type of behavior is education, of both management and relevant workers, to avoid the situation from occurring again. If it does occur again, within a short period of time, we will ask for more education.

Second, there is truly a lack of compliance and a subsequent failure in communicating. In fairness to those excavating, we also experience a fair share of utilities not marking, not properly identifying, or not marking within the legally defined parameters established in the law. Excavators reporting to the job after the deadlines for marking are either led to believe there are no utilities or are left with wait time and extra mobilization costs because they could not start as expected. Here, we generally ask for a process review and a Process Improvement Plan (PIP) that addresses the failures that gave rise to the lack of compliance. And if a PIP is already in place, we may seek review of and revisions to it.

Lastly, and perhaps more increasingly, there is the belief that personal

"needs" or "demands" outweigh the law. For example, a contractor calling a subcontractor to perform work that requires notice under the law but not providing the time for them to notify and wait. Before I retired, I was put in that situation more than once and my answer is what we should all answer now--"NO".

Our son, who manages several restaurants had to contend with a customer who refused to wear a mask upon entering the restaurant and walking to his seat, despite the governor's orders requiring it and the associated fines to the establishment should they allow that behavior. Our son asked the individual to put on a mask and offered him one, but the customer refused. Our son explained that he did not care about the individual's politics or whom they voted for. His concern was for his customers, his employees' health, and their continued employment.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a growing instance of the perceived immediate need outweighing the requirements of the law, and the benefit of all. That is dangerous. In these situations, especially if they are repetitive for the same individuals/corporations, the need to "punish" to realign behavior can grow, especially in the face of repeat violations. While this is a road I do not wish to travel, I realize our first and foremost priority is to the people of Ohio and their protection. I try to keep the same perspective our son did. 

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



Brent Saltzman talks about the Louisiana 811 dig law at the 2021 Damage Prevention Summit




(l to r) Jeff Morrison, Coordinator Damage Prevention, Brent Saltzman, Executive Director and Cole Vanderlick, Manager-Damage Prevention ready to answer all questions at the Louisiana 811 Summit information booth.

Solutions. Eric's story of "The Buried Truth Uncovered" inspired to live a safer life with more appreciation. We certainly appreciate Eric.

As always, Louisiana 811 is here to serve you. If you are an excavator, we want to help educate you on Louisiana's dig laws and safe excavation practices. We can provide training to help excavators submit and manage dig tickets online more efficiently. We'd like to provide you with 811 material for you to use on company equipment and vehicles so that you can help spread 811 awareness. Of course, this is a free service to help protect you. To our member utility and pipeline companies, please let us know how we can serve you. We are here to help solve any of your problems regarding 811. Whether it's your mapping, managing the dig tickets that you receive in Locator Ticket Management, or something else, please let us know how we can help you.

Also, we encourage you to get involved with your local Utility Coordinating Council meetings to discuss projects occurring in your area so that all stakeholders can coordinate together to work more safely and efficiently. Reach out to us, and we'll connect you with your local UCC Chairperson.

Whether you prefer meeting in-person or virtually, we are here for you to help with your needs. 



Louisiana 811 Board members Sean Cummings and Brandi Schmitt at the Louisiana 811 Summit.



The CenterPoint Energy booth was a popular place for information at the 2021 Damage Prevention Summit.



The challenges of accuracy at the Locate Rodeo.

If You Got Non-Renewed, You Are Not Alone!

By Virginia Reames
The Policy Center
Jackson, MS

Last time, we talked about how all of the catastrophic natural events that have happened worldwide this year were paid for by your carrier's "reinsurance" (5+ billion alone from Laura and Zeta just in Louisiana!) and that most insurance rates would "probably" be going up.

HA! If it was only going to be that simple!

The big trick now is going to be getting insurance at ALL! Yes, you read that right. It's not as though insurance was getting "Scarce" or anything – it's just that after so many expensive hits, companies are opting to take a seat on the sidelines, so to speak.

Companies are now deciding what they will, and most importantly, what they will NOT write, going forward. Yes, again, you read that right. They are deciding what they won't write. Not surprisingly, this is becoming quite a problem!

Accounts that have had a claim or two, will probably have a more difficult time getting renewed. It won't do any good to call the competing agent – he can only write what his companies will write – and right now, they are sending out list after list of accounts that they won't be renewing. Some will be for claims, but others will be for types of businesses that have been determined to be "high risk" – potentially being risky – "potentially".

Someone sitting at a desk somewhere in Outer Slobovia has decided that what your business does MIGHT be risky, they put it on a list and BAM! You get a letter of Non-Renewal. Did you have any claims? Doesn't matter. You might. Probably haven't. They just have decided they're not going to write, say excavators or plumbers anymore. I might be exaggerating to make my point – but not much.

Changes that will affect how we do business over the next few years are happening all around us – and we find out when we run into them. No – no one gets a phone call that says "well, we

have a "hard market" coming up and our company will be non-renewing this, this and all of those on the list we just sent you".

Nope.

As a customer, you open the mail one day and see "Notice of Cancellation, Non-Renewal or Change". You call your agent, who's gonna have to get "right back to you" after he calls the company – only to learn, yeah, they're not writing that line anymore. Has nothing to do with you – but it will definitely impact you. Especially because of the prices you'll probably run into when you find the company that WILL write your business!

And property...OMG!

Way in the back rooms of the insurance companies are a group of folks named actuaries. What they do is go over years and years of various kinds of losses, and figure out where/how their company is getting hit the worst – and where to perhaps look for future losses – and either not write those, or place deductibles or exclusions in the policy language.

Maps have been developed illustrating where the main losses are coming from – called "modeling" – and new, special rates have been applied to property located in these areas. Translated, that means that, for example, if you are located in a "high wind risk area" – you'll now be looking at large – LARGE – deductibles for specific kinds of losses. Example – instead of a high deductible overall on your building – you might have a \$500 deductible – but a \$10,000 "wind and hail deductible" if you are in one of those areas.

Which means, you'll have a \$500 deductible for fire, or anything other than wind or hail, (which, unfortunately, includes lightning) – so if lightning strikes the roof – it will be a \$10,000 deductible.

Never had a hail claim? Too bad. The "models" say you will. They also say, basically, "take it or leave it".

Think long and hard before you


"jump ship" and go to a different agent (assuming you can find one!) – because come next renewal, that company may not want to write either your building or your business. Every agent is in the same boat – finding coverage for customers. Period. Not pricing, coverage at all.

We had one account; OK it had some issues – but nothing too unusual. It got Nonrenewed, and after 3 months of searching for coverage, it got written – finally – at triple the expiring premium! And glad to get it – triple! They tagged it for being in a "high risk wind zone" which we never heard of the prior year – and companies would either NOT write it at all, or only if they exclude wind/hail coverage. THEN they addressed the claims (yes, they were hail claims). It was rough and this isn't the only one, either.

We have had scenarios like this in the past – but not for at least 20 years or so. All of a sudden, certain companies will write "this" and "this" ONLY. And at this new (higher) price. Period. Take it or leave it. Never mind they wrote it before – not gonna write it this year. Crazy.

It won't last forever – it isn't the "new normal". But it will definitely be the devil while it is this way. Look for things to get more normal in 3-4 years. Meanwhile, watch your claims. If you don't have to file it – don't. Repair those windshield chips out of pocket. I know you have glass coverage – but save that for an entire windshield. Change your thinking from "That's why we have insurance" to "We'll pay for this so we don't have higher insurance premiums next year." Except not liability.

NEVER pay liability claims out of pocket. You have to inform the company so they can handle it the right way because, you never know – maybe you really weren't at fault after all. And even if you were, the insurance company wants to handle it their way. So, only pay property claims out of pocket. YOUR property! Not the other guy's. Never say "Here's a couple hundred to fix that bumper".

Only YOUR property....talk to your agent. That's what we're here for! 



Louisiana 811, Call Before You Dig



- 💧 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.

Kinetica Emergency Phone Numbers: (337) 312-2101 or Toll Free (855) 395-3958

Pipeline safety is a shared responsibility

- 💧 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.

*For more information, or to schedule a free presentation please contact Kinetica's Damage Prevention Department.
(985) 223-6145*

April is Safe Digging Month

Info from CGA, can be downloaded at www.louisiana811.com under Resource Center



SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES – National Safe Digging Month (NSDM) 2021

CGA recommends the following social media messages for NSDM 2021.

First week of NSDM

4/1: Today is the first day of National Safe Digging Month! If you're planning any DIY projects this spring, remember to always #Call811 before you dig to #KnowWhatsBelow!

Second week of NSDM

4/6: With more of us working and learning from home these days, we all know how important our internet and other #utilities are. Don't knock out utility service in your community—always #Call811 before you dig to get utilities marked! #CallBeforeYouDig

4/7: Did you know that the first National Safe Digging Month was in 2008? This important observance that's celebrated each April reminds everyone to always #Call811 before digging projects to keep communities safe! #ThrowbackThursday

Third week of NSDM

4/15: With #EarthDay just one week away, remember to #Call811 today if your celebrations for the planet involve planting trees or other greenery. Always #KnowWhatsBelow by taking advantage of the free 811 service before disturbing the ground in any way.

4/17: Do your #FridayVibes have you dreaming up your next home improvement project? Remember to add calling 811 to your to-do list for any digging projects! If you don't #Call811 before digging, you could knock out utility service, injure yourself or face fines.

Fourth week of NSDM

4/19: Did you know? Before 811 was designated as the national #CallBeforeYouDig phone number, you had to know the 1-800 number for your local notification center. Now it's as easy as dialing 811 to have your #utilities marked! #Call811

4/22: Happy #EarthDay! No matter what day of the year, if you're planting trees, shrubs or other greenery, always #Call811 before you dig to keep yourself and your community safe.

Fifth week of NSDM

4/27: #ArborDay is this Friday, so make sure you #Call811 TODAY if your celebrations involve planting trees! Protect yourself and underground #utilities by contacting 811 before disturbing the ground.

4/30: Happy #ArborDay! Thank you to all the folks who called 811 before planting trees to make the world a little greener today, while keeping themselves and their communities safe. National Safe Digging Month may be ending, but always remember to #Call811 before you dig!

REMOTE INTERVIEW TIPS – April National Safe Digging Month

During this difficult time, it's important to have spokespeople prepared for potential media interviews while remaining compliant with social distancing restrictions. Below are some tips for spokespeople to be prepared in the event of a remote interview during this outbreak.

Phone interviews are an option, but you should also be prepared for a video interview using video conferencing tools like Google Hangouts, Skype or Zoom. Some conferencing tools require you to create a username, so be prepared for the station to add you as a contact ahead of time.

Double check the strength of your internet connection. If possible, use a wired connection rather than Wi-Fi for more reliable internet access.

Do a trial run with the video conferencing software before the interview to confirm that your video and microphone are working well.

Have the producer's contact information on-hand, and share your cell phone number with the station, in case of any connectivity issues during the interview.

Ensure your backdrop is clear and uncluttered, and set up in an area away from any potential noise disruptions.

Dress in business casual attire as you would for an in-person interview, and avoid distracting prints or patterns. If available, wear a branded polo or button-down shirt.



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