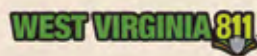
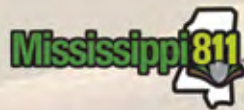


Featuring
News and
Editorials from



2025 ISSUE 1

Pipeline Safety

Global811 Magazine

In this issue

- 26 "I Just Dig the Holes"
- 44 Damage Prevention Professional
Certificate Program...It's Time

PRSR1 STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ACTS NOW INC.



The Conference Where You Are the Expert

Hosted by



GLOBAL
damage prevention
summit



Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX
www.actsnowinc.com/globaldps



from the PUBLISHER

By **Roger Cox**, President, ACTS Now, Inc.

Welcome to the first edition of the new concept damage prevention magazine. As many of you already know, ACTS has published statewide 811 damage prevention magazines for 18 years. Recently we acquired some of the products and services of Excavation Safety Alliance, one of which was the Excavation Safety Magazine. Our team began to explore the possibility of combining the two publications and we are elated to create and introduce the Global 811 Magazine. It is slated to be a quarterly publication and mailed to more than 85,000 stakeholders in this amazing industry. Its focus will continue to be on the many stakeholders fighting the good fight for damage prevention.

The six supporting 811 Centers will be featured in each issue. They are Alabama 811, Louisiana 811, Mississippi 811, Tennessee 811, Texas 811 and West Virginia 811. Each Executive Director will share their perspectives from within their own states. Wrapped around their points-of-view are both national and international articles selected for their uniqueness, successes, or for their commonsense approach in challenging the status quo in damage prevention and excavation safety.



Now, don't get me wrong! I have a great appreciation for innovation and technology. I'll be forever grateful to those folks who made it possible to have indoor plumbing. I've lived on both sides of that divide and will tell you indoor bathrooms are much better deals than the outdoor version.

So, I'm certainly not taking away from the importance of innovation or technology. But let us not be distracted from perhaps the greatest obstacle in reducing damage to our underground infrastructure. What new tech gadget are we waiting on to change the behaviors that leads to frustration and unnecessary cost of damage? What innovation is necessary to get the excavator to call before they dig or the locator to complete the ticket before the mark-by time expires?

What changes are necessary for real and sustainable progress that can be made in reducing damage? For the most part, it just requires changing our minds. Follow me on this. Statistics show that we know what to do but we aren't doing what we know.

No doubt that technology can provide us with data, accuracy, and speed that was unavailable 20 years ago. However, we're still facing many of the same challenges we faced 20 years ago. The top reason for damages continues to be "did not call before digging." If that is the truth, then the issue is not going to be solved with technology alone. While I'm not suggesting we spend less on technology, I am suggesting we may need to do what Lefty Frizzell said he never did.

For the younger crowd, Lefty sang he'd never go around mirrors because he couldn't stand to see a grown man cry. What would happen if, as an industry, we looked into the mirror of damage prevention? Would we see the need to adjust our attitudes to change the culture of damage prevention? Would we have the courage to change what we saw?

This year is my 50th year in this industry that I love! I am proud of the progress that has been made. I've met no one that thinks damage is okay. To reduce damage, we must increase our commitment to accountability and culture change. And finally, that culture change will likely not begin in the field.

I'd like to hear where you think the change needs to begin. Let's talk! Contact me at publisher@811magazines.com.

CONTENTS

Subscribe to

Global811
Magazine



acts 
TOWN HALL
Formerly ESA Town Hall



4

Your Quiet Neighbor

8

Grass Roots Safety

29

Alberta's Alternate Locate Provider Program

34

Modern Roots March

39

Ketha Molina Named Safety Professional

40

Damage Prevention:
The Unplanned Inspection

43

Kesley Tweed and the Future of Pipeline Safety

44

Damage Prevention Certificate Program... It's Time!

46

Reducing the \$4.6 Billion Impact of Utility Strikes in Australia

48

From Crisis to Culture Shift: The Damage Prevention Industry

10 Alabama

- 10 from the desk of Annette Bowman
- 11 Enforcement Trends Begin to Tell a Story
- 12 Newline/Free Educational Tools
- 13 Pipeline Awareness Across Alabama

15 Louisiana

- 15 from the desk of Brent Saltzman
- 16 Introducing a New Ticket Type - LARGE PROJECT!
- 17 Pre-Design Ticket Coming Soon
- 17 Dynamic Start Time Now Offered
- 18 High School Scholarship Opportunity
- 18 Locate Rodeo Winners
- 19 2025 Louisiana 811 Summit

20 Mississippi

- 20 from the desk of Mike Morgan
- 21 Fred Johnson, President of Mississippi 811 Retires Effective March 1, 2025
- 22 Enforcement Statistics Through December 2024

25 Tennessee

- 25 from the desk of Bill Turner
- 26 "I Just Dig the Holes"
- 27 Are You Well-Grounded?
- 28 We're Looking for a Few Good Men & Women

30 Texas

- 30 from the desk of Chris Stovall
- 31 2024: A Year in Review
- 32 Excavation Safety Days: Promoting Safe Digging Practices and Collaboration In Excavation

35 West Virginia

- 35 from the desk of Jerry Poage
- 36 From the Damage Prevention Board
- 36 Upcoming WV Meetings and Events
- 38 Reporting Complaints to the Damage Prevention Board

2025 Issue 1

Roger Cox, Publisher

Individual subscriptions are available without charge in the United States.

To subscribe go to www.actsnowinc.com/subscribe.

No material in this publication may be reproduced in any form without written consent. Editorial and advertising information contained in this publication are taken from sources considered to be reliable, but the publication cannot guarantee their accuracy.

Letters, comments, and articles are encouraged.

Email: publisher@811magazines.com

The entire contents copyrighted 2025 by ACTS Now, Inc.

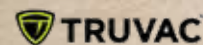
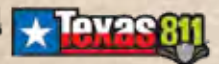
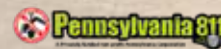
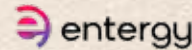
All rights reserved.



Members



American
Petroleum
Institute



Your Quiet 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 their security and integrity.

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.

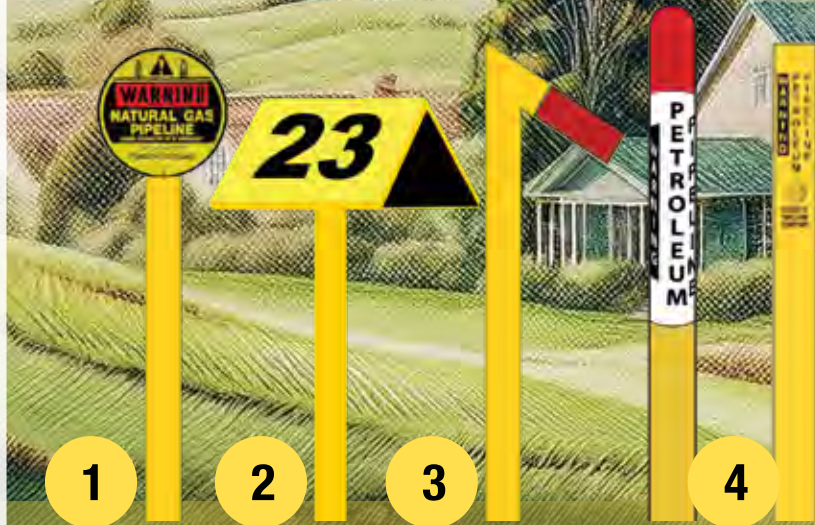
Pipeline markers are important for the safety of the general public. It is a federal crime for any person to willfully deface, damage, remove or destroy any pipeline signs or right-of-way marker.



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.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

So what exactly do all these pipelines transport?

There is a wide range of products traveling through 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 recognize 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. 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.

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 <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/about-phmsa/offices/office-pipeline-safety> for more information. For information on safe excavation, go online and visit <https://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. 

FREE PIPELINE SAFETY TOOLBOX TALK!



...And get more free safety resources, such as our Pre-Excavation Checklist in English and Spanish!



PIPELINEAWARENESS.ORG/EXCAVATOR-RESOURCES

Grass Roots Safety

BY **BROOKLYNE WASSEL**, COUNTY EXTENSION COORDINATOR AND AGENT, UGA EXTENSION – PIKE COUNTY

Originally published in the 2024 Excavation Safety Magazine.

Spreading the message of safety does not always come easily. It seems to be an easy topic to gloss over or ignore altogether and let someone else worry about it. Within the small community of Pike County, Georgia, the bulk of safety talks coming from Extension focused primarily on providing continuing education hours for first responders. These talks ranged from ladder and chainsaw safety to biting and stinging pests. It was not until the National Association of County Agricultural Agents annual meeting in West Palm Beach, Florida that safety moved from a mindset of must achieve hours to riding shotgun for numerous Extension programs.

The Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance (PASA) luncheon was a “must attend” for all agents who wanted free lunch and coveted swag. Not fully understanding the weight of the topic, the mood was light and fellowship filled the large meeting space. One twelve-minute documentary changed the trajectory of Extension programs for County Extension Agent, Brooklyne Wassel. “Three Seconds Later” was a powerful, moving film that started a true fire for safety and accident prevention programming. Though the documentary focused on drain tile safety, which is not commonly found in middle Georgia, it did touch on facets of community that connect all of agriculture: family, hard work, and love of the land.

One turn of the tractor or placement of one more fencepost could be the difference in not only one life, but a community’s. It turned out the warning signs were always there, literally. Once back in Pike County, the scenery looked largely familiar but new signs seemed to emerge out of nowhere, all pipeline markers. There they were, always standing and warning but only to those who knew how to listen.

Pike County, regardless of its small geographic area, plays host to two pipelines which mark an “X” right through the heart of the community. Markers everywhere, potential accidents lurking,



and everyone was continuing life as normal. It became apparent that the community was in the same blissful ignorance as the pre-conference Ms. Wassel. How do you convince a community who is quite happy to live their lives the same way they always have, that they should care about pipeline safety? What lured all those agents into a meeting room in Florida? Food and swag! That was a start.

811 Day occurs every year on August 11 and stands to serve as a reminder to put in locate requests to state One Call centers to prevent utility accidents and disruptions. Unless in the utility field, this might not appear on most calendars. Pike County Extension sought to change that for those in the community. Calling on support from Georgia 811, Southern Rivers Energy, Pike County Water and Sewerage Authority, and City of Zebulon Water and Wastewater, funds were raised and swag was collected to give to the community on August 11. Signs were made advertising free, local breakfast consisting of sausage biscuits and iced coffee. With the ideal location just off the square and less than a mile from the public-school system, morning traffic was directed through a lane providing quick

education, swag, and breakfast to all who entered. The only catch? Each participant had to sign a pledge card to call 811 before digging. That was it. The message was simple, “Call 811.” In the two years of hosting the event, the Pike County Extension office has secured over two hundred pledges to call before digging.

One of the unforeseen obstacles in providing education of this nature in such a tightknit community is the lack of wanting “an outsider” or “stranger” to come to a property for a locate request. This stigma has been slowly squandered due to the workers in the 8/11 assembly line. All those who greet vehicles, distribute goodie bags, give pledge cards, deliver biscuits, and dole out coffee are those who work with utilities and serve as locators. This puts a community face with the concept of the call. It has led to great conversation, deeper understanding, and lessened hesitance for making the important call.

After completing additional online safety training concerning 811 to become more familiar with the material and how to distribute the information, Ms. Wassel learned of a law requiring first responders

to be notified of pipeline accidents. While this is at first very logical, it raised concerns for a community such as Pike County that runs primarily off volunteers. Are volunteers trained properly on how to respond? Could one accident lead to more without proper training? Thanks to relationships forged during that ever-important luncheon, Ms. Wassel reached out to a Kinder Morgan representative, Keith Reese, to help conduct a training for first responders. Mr. Reese led a formal training for all of Pike County's volunteer emergency responders covering pipeline function, proper accident protocol, and the opportunity for additional training. It was eye-opening for the volunteers to learn about a potential emergency call concerning underground utilities.

Teaching safety has become a passion project for Ms. Wassel. She most recently hosted the inaugural Pike County Farm Safety Day for all of the county's seventh grade. Two hundred and seventy-five students spent a full day on the grounds of the community agricultural center learning safety topics. Students learned about pesticide safety, tractor safety, fire safety, livestock safety, trailer safety, and more. No safety day would be complete without 811. While seventh graders are not necessarily the traditional audience for 811 education, there are always untapped opportunities for transferring knowledge. Students learned about 811, the purpose, and when to call. They completed the station by competing in an 811 relay in which students were assigned utilities and had to race their lines to tag their teammate. Students were able to learn the meaning of the flags, understand their significance, and blow off some energy.

Safety continues to play a role in Pike County Extension programming. There is always a way to weave in safety messaging into existing programs with existing audiences, but there are also untouched audiences who have not heard about the importance of making small actions like calling 811 to achieve large impacts. Consider building excavation safety and 811 into future programming. Pike County Extension has employed:

- Discussing 811 during fencing demos
- Writing 811 articles for the newspaper
- Announcing 8/11 and National Safe Digging Month (April) to local groups such as Cattlemen's and Farm Bureau
- Share videos provided by PASA on social media
- Discussing utility safety while on site where markers are visible 🍅

Brooklyne Wassel is the County Extension Coordinator and Agent with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service where she has served in Pike County since 2018. Her background is in Animal Sciences, but her focus now consists of water, pollinators, livestock, homesteading, and safety.



from the desk of **ANNETTE BOWMAN**

Annette Bowman, Executive Director, Alabama 811



The gas pipeline industry has long been a supporter of damage prevention and the 811 system. They are the only underground facility operator who is federally mandated to participate in 811 and maintain a damage prevention program. There is a full guideline in the federal code known as RP1162 which outlines the requirements and best practices for an effective damage prevention program for a gas or pipeline operator.

These guidelines don't only impact the pipeline industry but are also a tool to measure state programs for effective damage prevention which can result in federal money grant awards as well as restricted funds dependent on the state programs that meet baseline criteria. Over the years, some of the amendments to the Alabama code for the Underground Damage Prevention law have been a direct result of the pipeline industry regulated program.

Alabama 811 has over one hundred (100) gas systems and pipeline operators who take the first step in protecting their facilities, those who live and work around them and the general public through the 811 program. Their commitment to safety and damage prevention is recognized and appreciated.

Enforcement Trends Begin to Tell a Story

The Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA) began hearing violation complaints in 2021. This past year was four years of the new enforcement process in Alabama to help ensure compliance with the Underground Damage Prevention law and hopefully reduce the potential for damage to underground facilities. There have been some outlying factors that impact the review of the data but there are some trends beginning to develop.

Over the last four years there have been almost 1,370 violation complaints submitted. In 2024, there were 481. In the first year, 53% of complaints received listed “no locate request” as the root cause compared to 32% in 2024. In turn, more complaints are noting “use of mechanized equipment” or “failure to use reasonable care in the tolerance zone” as the root cause. Alabama 811 continues to educate on the need to contact 811 prior to any excavation project but is beginning to focus more on educational programs regarding safe digging practices or other aspects of the law.

Complaints noting that a damage occurred due to the alleged violation are around 70% of those reported. This continues to be an area of concern as damages to underground facilities is still occurring at such a high rate. As we focus on this data, Alabama 811 is looking at trends to determine what other factors

could be relative to these damages. National data has shown that if a locate request is placed prior to excavation, the chance of damaging a facility is less than 1%. So why are we still seeing a trend of damages if the “no notice” cause is diminishing? No locates root cause reported for 2021 as compared to 2024 has declined around 21% with damages only reducing around 6%.

The root cause of facilities not being marked in a timely manner does not remain consistent year after year. A lot of this is dependent on the reporting party. As expected, more complaints are filed by underground facility owners than excavators. Most that are reported by the excavating community tend to come in waves from a single excavator related to a particular job site where problems in the field may be an issue. This criteria is a little harder to analyze from the complaint filed data. Alabama 811 is utilizing other internal data to attempt to arrive at a better number regarding late locate markings.

To be able to gauge trends in the field and look for areas to affect change, one must have data. The enforcement process is helping to bring some of these areas of concern to light. By being able to isolate needed areas of improvement, education programs, legislative changes, and other initiatives can be developed to help make Alabama a safer place to live and work. ●

Dashboard Data

	Total
Violations Filed for Information Only	141
Violations Filed for Penalty Review	339
Violations with Penalty Action	273
Violations Dismissed	62
Violations Pending Further Review	1
Violations Filed by Stakeholder	
Excavator	84
Facility Owner	332
Homeowner	6
Locator	4



**ALUDPA
DASHBOARD**

LOCATE REQUESTS PROCESSED

January – December 2024
603,976 – 1% increase from 2023

January 2025
46,873 - 5% increase compared to January 2024

Transmissions – Utility Members/Locators

January – December 2024
4,490,392 – 6% decrease from 2023

January 2025
4,185,798 – 3% increase compared to January 2024

MEMBERS

As of December 31, 2024
672 New Members
January 2025:
Hotwire Communications
Olin Corporation

COMMON GROUND ALLIANCE (CGA)

Visit www.commongroundalliance.com for information on damage prevention initiatives from across the U.S., awareness tools and educational materials just to name a few of the many resources available.

The 2023 Annual DIRT Report and Analysis is now available for download from CGA's website link: <https://dirt.commongroundalliance.com/>.

The CGA Conference and Expo 2025 is scheduled for April 7-10, 2025 in Orlando, FL. Visit cgaconference.com for more information.

NEWSLINE



FREE EDUCATION TOOLS

Alabama 811 has dedicated staff to help increase awareness and provide training for those who need additional information on 811 and safe digging practices. There is a dedicated person for North, Central and South Alabama. In addition, educational tools are available online for excavator and children's programs.

Many excavators work in various states and damage prevention laws can change as you cross state lines. Also, with new crews being hired on or the need for refresher courses, our online program is a great tool for rainy days, new employee training, or an update to ensure crews are up to date with new law changes. The online excavator training tool is a FREE, self-paced tool that should take around 45-minutes to complete and provides an overview of the law, requirements, and how to dig safely. The course will provide a certificate upon completion. To sign up visit <https://al811.com/excavator-training/>.

Alabama 811 is committed to helping students and families understand the importance of safe digging practices around underground utilities, including water, sewer, natural gas, electricity and communication lines. The Alabama 811 Kids Safe Digging program is an engaging educational initiative to increase awareness and encourage students to learn about energy sources and how to stay safe at home, school, and outdoors. These tools are easily available for schools, civic and other children's programs. Visit <https://al811.com/kids-safe-digging/> and see how many answers you get right!

Registration now open!

ALABAMA

damage prevention

summit

A CGA REGIONAL PARTNER EVENT

September 9 - 11, 2025

The Lodge at Gulf State Park
Gulf Shores

Dig Safely. Contact 811 Before You Excavate!

When people need to dig, or **excavate**, they must be careful because important **utilities** like water pipes, electric lines, and gas pipes are **buried** underground. Digging without checking first can cause an **accident** and lead to **damage**. That's why it's important to contact 811 before using a **shovel** or any other tool. Calling helps **prevent** accidents and keeps everyone safe. It's our **responsibility** to make sure all **digging** is done with **safety** in mind so we don't damage anything **underground**.

UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS — the words are in bold above

1 / 11

To keep something from happening.

T E V P R E N

APACT

ALABAMA PIPELINE AWARENESS COOPERATIVE TRAINING



Pipeline Awareness Across Alabama

Did you attend an APACT meeting this past year? Did you notice anything different?

Alabama 811's Alabama Pipeline Awareness Cooperative Training, or APACT, has been a huge success over the years. This past year was no different in success, but it may have had a new face or two at the podium.

APACT continued our successful partnership with Paradigm that began in 2023, and we began a new partnership with the Alabama Pipeline Emergency Response Initiative (APERI). In 2024 the APACT program was taught by our 811 Damage Prevention Coordinators along with an instructor from the APERI program. This partnership added depth to the overall education program. The APERI instructors were able to provide real-life experiences and educational content to those in attendance.


The APACT program was presented in 16 cities throughout the state. Attendance averaged just over 100 people per meeting with a grand total of almost 1,700 people hearing the program. The feedback received from our new partnership with APERI has been very positive and we look forward to continuing to partner with APERI and Paradigm in 2025 and for years to come.

The APACT program was developed to provide pipeline and natural gas operators in our state with a way to help them meet their public awareness and education goals. Each year, emergency responders,

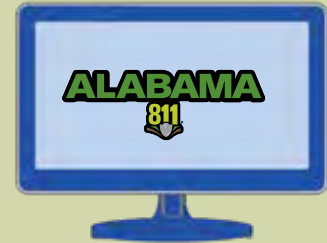
public officials, and excavators throughout the state are invited to attend a regional meeting where the operators provide free educational training, a meal, and time to foster working relationships with each entity represented. The training includes information on how to live and work safely around natural gas and pipeline facilities, how to utilize the 811 system, and how to respond if a release or incident were to occur. We encourage all excavators, local utility operators, public works crews, city leaders, public officials, and emergency responder groups to attend. The annual training provides excellent educational opportunities for all in attendance. The face-to-face interaction between natural gas and pipeline operators with all others in attendance is very valuable. Knowing who to contact and how to reach them during an emergency situation is extremely important and should be established prior to the occurrence of an incident.

If you are interested in attending one of these free meetings, please visit our website for the meeting schedule to find a meeting location near you: <https://al.pipeline-awareness.com>

Meeting dates are in the process of being confirmed and are tentatively scheduled for June through August of this year. When viewing the meeting schedule online, be sure to click on the meeting you wish to attend and RSVP in advance.

We look forward to seeing you at an APACT meeting this year. 

NEWSLINE



WEBSITE

Visit Alabama 811's website (www.al811.com) for information and helpful tools.

- **Excavator Training:** A free online excavator training tool is available.

Visit <https://al811.com/excavator-training/> for more information.

- **Children's educational games:** Free games to educate early on the need for safe digging knowledge.

Visit <https://al811.com/kids-safe-digging/> to see how much you know!

ONLINE AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS FOR LOCATE REQUESTS ...

There are two options for "calling" in a locate request that doesn't require you to actually call Alabama 811. Locate requests can be processed online via the web portal or the mobile application. Visit Alabama 811's website at www.al811.com to get more information about these two programs.

ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

The underground damage prevention enforcement process became official as of November 2020. Information on how the process works and Enforcement Authority determinations can be found at the Underground Damage Prevention Authority website – www.aludpa.org.

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.**



from the desk of BRENT SALTZMAN

Brent Saltzman, Executive Director, Louisiana 811



As we enter 2025, several new initiatives have either been implemented or will be implemented very soon. In January, our latest legislative amendment took effect with our Large Project Excavation or Demotion ticket. Shortly after this, we rolled out our Dynamic Start Time offering. And by the end of the first quarter, our hope is to make available a Pre-Design ticket. All these new tools only help make our program better and help with our damage prevention efforts. I highly recommend you check out information regarding each of these initiatives in this issue of the magazine.

In late January, we conducted our annual Damage Prevention Summit, and it was a resounding success! This was the first year this event was held in Lafayette and we had over 300 attendees who heard about the aforementioned change to our dig law, the latest from ConnectLA (broadband work), what a successful utility coordination council looks like, excavator awareness of the differences in surrounding state's dig laws, and so much more. We concluded the Summit by conducting the annual Locate Rodeo at SLEMCO where locators from around the state competed for a \$1,000 grand prize! I cannot stress enough the importance of attending functions like this where participants can learn AND have fun.

Plans are already underway for the Digger's Night Out Programs around the state. The Lafayette area program will be held Thursday, April 17 at River Oaks Catering & Event Center, and the Northshore program will be held Wednesday, September 3 at the Castine Center in Mandeville, and the Lake Charles program will be held October 16 at the West Cal Arena in Sulphur. These educational dinner programs for excavators are held throughout the year in various locations. Check out our Events Calendar (<https://louisiana811.com/events-calendar/>) to find out how to register and get involved. Did I mention that door prizes galore and meals are served at these events? Don't miss out!

In closing, are you in need of someone to provide a safe digging presentation? If so, feel free to reach out to one of our awesome damage prevention professionals to schedule a meeting. There is no fee involved, and we are happy to provide this service to all our stakeholders. Either call 8-1-1 or go to our website for contact information.

Until next time, be safe and God bless!

Introducing a New Ticket Type - **LARGE PROJECT!**

Effective January 1, 2025, all excavators and demolishers now can select a **LARGE PROJECT EXCAVATION OR DEMOLITION TICKET** when entering tickets online. Note that this is a voluntary offering and not mandated by law.

A Large Project is work that cannot reasonably be completed within 20 calendar days (30 days for agriculture, forestry, or marine projects) and must be submitted at least 10 business days **PRIOR** to the actual work start-by date. These tickets are valid for 90 calendar days and an excavator/demolisher can include any subcontractors working on the project.

The mark-date and time are to be determined by **MUTUAL AGREEMENT** between the excavator/demolisher and the underground utility/facility operators; therefore, no excavation/demolition should commence until a meeting has taken place between both parties. As a result, a **LARGE PROJECT EXCAVATION OR DEMOLITION TICKET WILL NOT HAVE A MARK-BY DATE/TIME ON THE TICKET.**

It will be the responsibility of the underground utility/facility operator to contact the excavator/demolisher to set up the meeting time and location. If **ALL** parties cannot agree on the marking schedule, the Large Project designation will no longer be valid, and it will be incumbent upon the excavator/demolisher to re-enter a routine two-full business day ticket.

When an **excavator/demolisher** enters a ticket online, the following message will be displayed informing them of what to expect next:

Ticket XXXXXXXXXX has been released to the affected utilities. The Large Project ticket is valid for 90 calendar days. The mark-date and time are to be determined

by mutual agreement between you (the excavator/demolisher) and the underground utility/facility operators; therefore, no excavation/demolisher should commence until a meeting has taken place between both parties. It will be the underground utility/facility operator's responsibility to contact you to set up the meeting time and location. Note that if **ALL** parties cannot agree on the marking schedule, the Large Project designation will no longer be valid, and it will be incumbent on you to re-enter a routine two-full business day ticket. Refer to the LA811 website for frequently asked questions regarding the Large Project process by clicking here: <https://louisiana811.com/resource-center/>.

Please check your email for a copy of the ticket and the list of notified utilities and be aware that any private lines or utilities not listed are your responsibility to contact before excavation or demolition. Make sure all information is correct, and all utilities have responded before beginning your work. If changes are needed, please update the ticket to ensure the dig site(s) are properly covered.

When a Louisiana 811 member receives the ticket, the following message will be displayed informing them of their responsibilities:

Ticket XXXXXXXXXX has been released to the affected utilities. The Large Project ticket is valid for 90 calendar days. The mark-date and time are to be determined by mutual agreement between the excavator/demolisher and you, the underground utility/facility operators; therefore, no excavation/demolition should commence until a meeting has taken place between both parties. It will be your (the underground utility/facility operator) responsibility to contact the excavator/demolisher to set up the meeting time and location. Note that if **ALL** parties cannot agree on the marking schedule,

the Large Project designation will no longer be valid, and it will be incumbent upon the excavator/demolisher to re-enter a routine two-full business day ticket.

LARGE PROJECT Response codes are:
Code 1: Clear/No Conflict in Area of Excavation

Code 7: Unable to reach mutual agreement - ticket has been deferred back to routine process per state law. (Mutual agreement not reached)

Code 8: In progress - mutual agreement has been initiated. (Agreement process initiated)

Code 9: Mutual agreement process confirmed - markings will occur per the mutual agreement process. (Mutual agreement confirmed)

As an added valuable resource for all our stakeholders, refer to the LA811 website for a more comprehensive outline of how this process works and for frequently asked questions regarding the **LARGE PROJECT EXCAVATION OR DEMOLITION TICKET** by clicking here: <https://louisiana811.com/resource-center/>. Also available by clicking this link, is a Large Project Ticket Flow Chart and ACT No. 75 outlining this amendment to the LA Underground Utilities & Facilities Damage Prevention Law (Title 40, Section R.S. 1749.11 to 1749.27).

Louisiana 811 is already working closely with the Dig Law Advisory Committee to make some slight modifications to the Dig Law regarding this legislation. Things under consideration are making the requirement that the area of work must be contiguous (touching), strengthening the language that if any of the members on a given ticket disagree with the marking agreement and the ticket will become null and void. 🟡

Pre-Design Ticket Coming Soon

The Louisiana 811 Board of Directors and Staff have been working hard to search for ideas that would assist designers/surveyors in determining the location of our members' underground and submerged utilities/facilities. Historically, designers enter locate requests and members may or may not respond to such notices resulting in frustration from both parties. A recent amendment to the Louisiana Underground Utilities & Facilities Damage Prevention Law (Dig Law) solidified membership's opinion regarding this matter by stating that the law is specifically for excavation and demolition purposes only (reference RS 40:1749.13 A.). However, it is apparent that the services provided by designers/surveyors are invaluable and ultimately benefit the Louisiana 811 members.

After some research around the country, it was discovered that Iowa One Call had a robust program that has been in place for years and works very well for both parties. The board and staff reviewed the process with several engineering firms and have decided to mimic Iowa's process and

implement a Pre-Design ticket that will go into effect as soon as we have secured engineering contact information from our members. We anticipate this process to be completed very soon.

Here is how this process will work:

1. A "Pre-Design" ticket header will be selected by a designer/surveyor.
2. The area of the proposed work area would be outlined online like any other ticket.
3. The system (software) would generate a mock ticket indicating the impacted members and will display a member's engineering contact information (an email address and possibly a phone number).
4. After initial contact from the designer/surveyor, it would be the engineering contact's responsibility to respond to the designer/surveyor within five (5) business days with either as-built drawings, detailed maps, or any other information sufficient to aid in the design work of the project.

Pre-Design Process

1. Designer chooses Pre-Design Ticket from the ticket header.
2. Designer outlines the area of the map where the project is located.
3. The software displays the engineering contact information for each potentially impacted member.
4. Engineering contact corresponds with Designer within five business days of initial contact.
5. Designer contacts engineering contact requesting either maps or other information.

Dynamic Start Time

Dynamic Start Time Now Offered

Excavators now can now choose your start date and time when entering tickets online! We have recently implemented this exciting new tool when planning your next project.

Here is how it works:

1. At the time of entering a locate request online, the excavator or demolisher will be prompted to consider extending the start time of their proposed excavation or demolition.
2. A popup calendar will appear for online users allowing excavators/demolishers the option to extend the start date/time of an excavation ranging between two full business days and five full business days, excluding weekends and

holidays. All other days on the calendar will be unavailable and grayed out. Only normal business hours (7AM-6PM) can be chosen as the starting time option.

3. An excavator can choose to extend the start date/time to assist locators in a "High Profile Area", which will give locators additional time and personnel to adequately mark all facilities.

The implementation of a new tool such as this has proven great results in other states. Research and data have proven that an excavator is more likely to have the area of excavation marked by providing extra time. Note that ticket life is not shortened when choosing the date and time. It will be calculated from the mark-by date and time you choose!

1. Excavator/demolisher submits locate request at 1:00 PM Monday June 24; calculated (2) full business days would be 7:00 AM Thursday June 27
2. On ticket submission page, start-by date is empty: user must enter date/time.
3. User is presented a message to consider extending the start-by date/time.
4. If user opts out of selecting a start-by time, system defaults to (2) full business days.
5. Max out at (5) business days, unavailable days will be grayed out.

High School Scholarship Opportunity



Scan here

If you happen to have a high school senior who resides in Louisiana, we are again offering our annual \$811 scholarships! Applications must be received by 5 PM on Friday, April 4, 2025. We will have four scholarships available with two for a four-year accredited college or university and two for an accredited trade school. Guidelines and more details can be found here: <https://scholarship.louisiana811.com/>.

2025 Louisiana Locate Rodeo



Call 811 before you dig



Your safety is our number one priority.

From installing a new pool to simply planting a tree, digging without knowing what's beneath the surface can be extremely dangerous. You could also disrupt utility services to your neighborhood, leading to expensive repairs and fines.

When you call 811, all utilities, including Entergy, will respond within two business days to locate and mark the underground utility lines. (The two business days start the morning after you call).

And if you suspect a gas leak, leave the area immediately and call **1-800-ENTERGY** (368-3749) or **911**. Indications of a gas leak include the distinctive smell of natural gas, a whistling or hissing sound near a gas appliance, or dead vegetation and bubbles near a gas line.

We power life.SM

A message from Entergy New Orleans, LLC and Entergy Louisiana, LLC
©2023 Entergy Services, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

2025 Louisiana 811 Damage Prevention Summit



Scan the QR code below to see the exhibitors and sponsors who helped make the 2025 Louisiana Damage Prevention Summit another great success! Already looking forward to 2026 in Lafayette...



Thank You Sponsors and Exhibitors!

LOUISIANA GAS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

PIPELINE SAFETY CONFERENCE

AUG 11-14, 2025 | HILTON RIVERSIDE, NEW ORLEANS, LA

Find more info at LouisianaGas.org/PSC

GASTEC Expo Day | March 25 | Zachary, LA
 Scholarship Golf Tournament | May 15 | Jennings, LA
 College Scholarship Program | July 1 | Application Deadline
 Pipeline Safety Conference | Aug. 11-14 | New Orleans, LA
 Sporting Clay Tournament | Oct. 3 | Port Allen, LA
 Annual Operations Conference | Oct. 20-22 | Marksville, LA

*Want to make sure you're in the know?
Scan the code to add your email to our list!*

HF Sinclair
MIDSTREAM

HF Sinclair Midstream's top priority is safety. We are committed to protecting communities, people and the environment. To support that, pipeline safety is critical. Always remember to call 811 before you dig.

In case of an emergency, call (877) 748-4464

from the desk of **MIKE MORGAN**

Mike Morgan, President, Mississippi 811



Let me begin by saying it is a real honor to have been chosen to sit in this chair that has been graced by two great men. Since Mississippi 811's beginning, both Sam and Fred Johnson have led the organization with integrity and a focus on safe digging. Fred's retirement was effective March 1 and let me simply say that I appreciate everything Fred has taught me and I will continue to cherish our friendship.

During our Damage Prevention Summit, the Board of Directors began the interview process to replace Fred as the President of Mississippi 811. After careful consideration on their part, I was chosen to be their replacement. I can honestly say that it was a very humbling experience.

Although I've been in the utility industry my entire life and having served on various 811 boards across the country, including the Mississippi 811 Board, I knew this opportunity would be both challenging and fulfilling.

For the past six months my focus has been on how best to enhance Sam and Fred's vision and the Board's expectations for this corporation and figure out how to advance Mississippi 811 into the future efficiently and successfully.

After careful thought I realized that one of the main ingredients was missing. My replacement. Where do I start and who do I consider? Obviously, I had to find someone that was a champion for damage prevention and safety, but they also needed to possess passion for industry. These factors, all put together, definitely created the perfect challenge for not only the present but the future. Many great candidates came to mind and several conversations and resumes were shared, but as I had learned many years before, the best place to start was in prayer with our Lord.

As I began to pray, a conversation that I had with a young man months before came to my mind along with other comments about this same gentleman that were made by some of the best damage prevention souls in the industry. It was then that I realized I needed to follow up on that conversation. We spoke several days later after my prayer, and everything just fell into place just as I already knew it would. This young man sent me his very impressive resume and spoke of his dream and passion for our organization, shared ideas he would like to see moving forward into the future and basically had me convinced that he possessed all the qualities that I was looking for in a leader. With nothing but excitement and determination, I reached for my phone and made the phone call to ask this young man to be our Director of Operation in which he gratefully and gladly accepted.

Mr. Cole Fesmire who was the Director of Public Works for the city of Olive Branch, Mississippi started his new journey with Mississippi 811 on January 6, 2025, as the Vice President – Director of Operations. We are so happy and blessed to welcome Cole, his wife Claire and their three children to the 811 family. Cole also served on our Board of Directors representing Municipal Utilities as well as the Mississippi Natural Gas Board where he will continue to serve representing Mississippi 811. Cole joins us with a broad set of skills that range from Damage Prevention to management, leadership, project management and he also carries a very high level of integrity. Please take the time to welcome and support Cole on this new and exciting chapter of his life.

On behalf of the entire Mississippi 811 staff, we thank you for the opportunity to serve you and don't hesitate to contact us with ideas of how we can improve that service.

Dig safely... it's not just the law in Mississippi - it's the right thing to do!

Fred Johnson, President of Mississippi 811 Retires Effective March 1, 2025

By **Roger Cox**, President ACTS Now, Inc,



“...it has been a great ride. I not only got to work with a great staff, but along the way met so many people who shared our common goals.”

From the City of Corinth Police Chief to Mississippi 811 President, Fred Johnson earned the respect of those who worked with him and those he faithfully served. It was not uncommon to sit in a meeting with Fred who quietly listened intently to every word spoken without making a comment. No need to speak out loud if you weren't going to add anything beneficial to the meeting. It was his style of leadership and Mississippi 811 benefited from it.

He began his career at Mississippi 811 as a Damage Prevention Coordinator in 2004. There he connected with the utilities, excavators and locators in the field to help resolve the natural frustrations that arise on any job site where conflicts abound. During the early days, while his experience in excavation may have been lacking, his understanding of conflict resolution and people helped make him a go-to person when things needed to be ratcheted down.

In 2005 Fred accepted the challenge of Call Center Manager that morphed into Operations Manager, where his penchant for efficiency made a lasting mark on the entire organization.

When Sam Johnson, long-time President retired in 2023, the 811 Board of Directors turned to Fred to lead the organization forward for at least two years, giving them some time to consider a longer-term solution for the leadership of the organization. Fred did what he always did, when he was asked for help, he said “yes.”


His familiarity with the staff, the board, and the operation of Mississippi 811 as well as his personal integrity was a

winning combination for all users and members of Mississippi 811. He fulfilled his commitment to the Board by serving the two years they requested and recognized it was the right time for Mississippi 811 to move forward under new leadership with new ideas and energy. He shared a thought before handing off the baton to Mike Morgan, President of Mississippi 811, effective March 1, 2025. He said, “Never forget that everything we’ve done in the past and everything you do in the future should be done with the understanding that the staff is not Mississippi 811. The members are Mississippi 811. And all of us work for them.”

On February 25, 2025, a retirement ceremony was held to honor Fred Johnson. Coworkers, friends, family, and peers attended to reflect on past accomplishments, funny stories, and share in everyone's best wishes for him going forward.

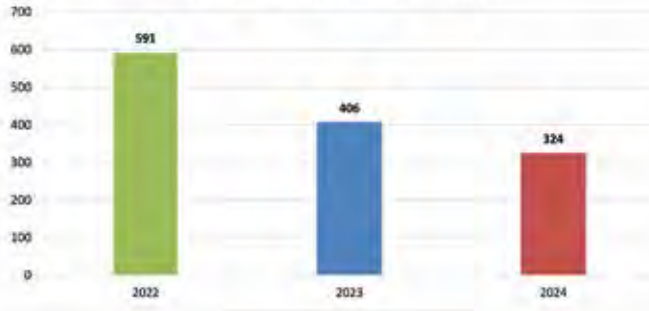
When asked to summarize his time at Mississippi 811 he smiled and said, “Well, first of all, it has been a great ride. I not only got to work with a great staff, but along the way met so many people who shared our common goals. They were good people, passionate, willing to share their thoughts and became partners in our quest to make Mississippi a safer place to live and work.”

He continued, “There's no other way to say it. I've been blessed and it's been an honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to serve and now it's time to pass the baton to the next generation of professionals.”

Well said and well done, my friend! 

Enforcement Statistics Through December 2024

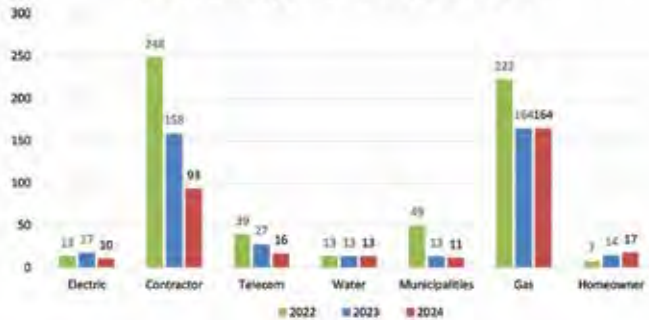
AVRs - YTD Trend - thru Year End



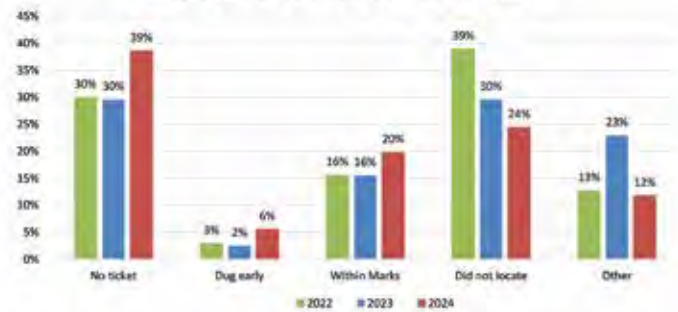
AVRs - By Month YTD



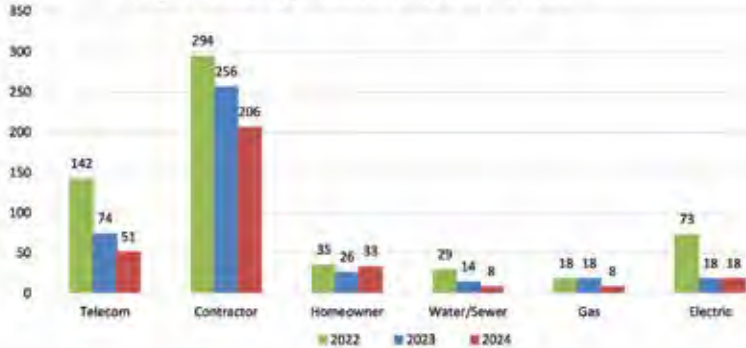
AVRs Submitted by Stakeholder Group - thru Year End



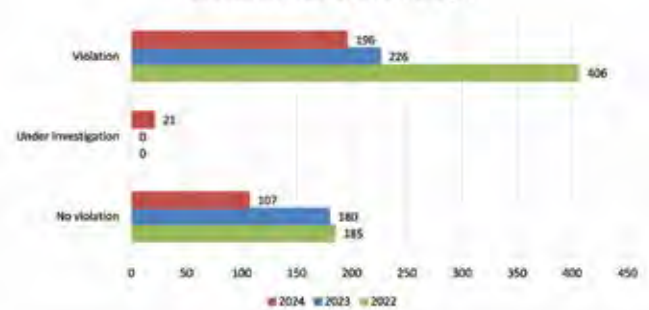
Alleged Violations by Category - thru Year End



Alleged Violators by Stakeholder Group - thru Year End



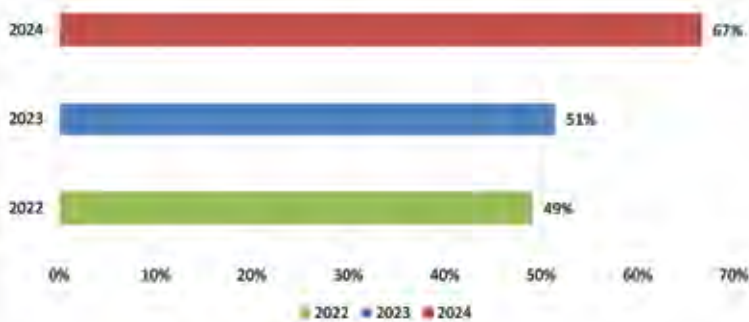
Enforcement Status - thru Year End



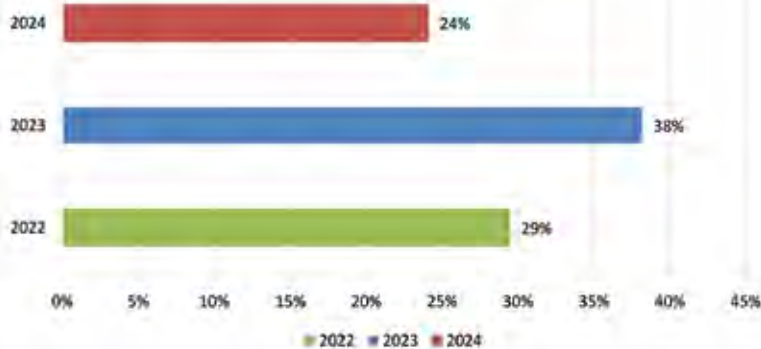
Enforcement Action - thru Year End



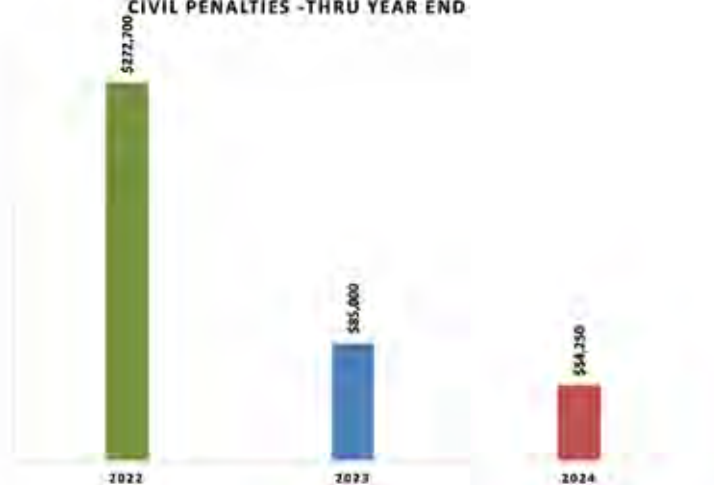
AVRs submitted as result of damage - thru Year End



AVRs submitted w/o documentation - thru Year End



CIVIL PENALTIES -THRU YEAR END



Committed to
safe
digging in
Mississippi



To submit an Alleged
Violation Report go to
www.msdamageprevention.com
or contact us at
enforcement@msdamageprevention.com

Building better, together.



Software designed by One Calls for One Calls



from the desk of **BILL TURNER**

William “Bill” Turner, President, Tennessee 811

Welcome to 2025. I would like to start by thanking all the employees at Tennessee 811. Their hard work, dedication, and commitment to Customer Experience is a very important part of providing damage prevention for the state of Tennessee.

2024 was another record ticket volume year with 1,077,815 tickets. Fifteen new utilities joined our service to assist in protecting their underground facilities from excavation damage. Believe it or not, there are still approximately 45 utilities that are not members of Tennessee 811. Our Liaison staff communicate with them regularly to encourage their participation.

As most of our readers are aware, Tennessee 811 is always actively working to change and improve our state’s Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act. The Act dictates the responsibilities that all stakeholders have related to preventing damage to underground facilities. You will typically read in this magazine about our proposed efforts and our successful accomplishments. We have a strong support group of utility members, excavators, and the enforcement board. We all work together to determine what are the most important changes and improvements to promote damage prevention. Passing legislation is no easy task, but we have been successful due mostly to the efforts and collaboration of our stakeholders.

Tennessee 811 did not propose any legislative changes this year. We are working with our stakeholders to create a legislative agenda with proposed improvements and changes to be introduced in 2026. We always encourage our readers to get involved and let your voice be heard.

2025 is starting out to be another busy year. We expect another record ticket volume year. Tennessee 811 is working on several projects and programs that will assist our stakeholders and help promote damage prevention. Please remember to visit our website (www.tenn811.com) for helpful tools and information.

Thank you for your continued support and efforts to make Tennessee a safer place.



“I Just Dig the Holes”

By **Marcus Bartholomew**, Damage Prevention Liaison, Tennessee 811



A Damage Prevention Liaison gets the opportunity to meet with a wide range of stakeholders in the utility world. One of our core duties includes safety presentations to utilities, excavators, locators, government bodies, and other groups who deal with underground utilities. While our presentations vary depending on our audience, I always like to give an overview of the 811 system to clear up any misinformation about our process and how locate tickets work. We discuss local, statewide, and national examples of the root cause of damage, “reasonable care” violations, tolerance/safety zone issues, and best practices that can be used to avoid damage and violations of the Tennessee Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act. These always appear to be popular topics with the people who work in the field doing excavation and utility work especially when I can use photos of actual damage from job sites and talk about the issues surrounding how the damage occurred.

The questions, comments, and discussions that take place during our presentations are educational for me, as I get to hear first-hand the problems that people run into and frustrations they deal with in their world. These are all things we take back with us to share with our damage prevention co-workers to make our presentations more relevant and engaging for the groups we deal with the most.

Sometimes the inspiration to completely revamp presentation material comes from one of those questions or comments from the audience. An example would be last year when I was presenting to a group of construction workers and heard:

“Man, I just dig the holes...”

A light moment for sure, as the very seasoned gentleman who made this comment had his fellow co-workers erupting in laughter. They also proceeded to remind him of other things he did and DIDN'T do at work...


What stuck with me about this comment was the fact that maybe people on the job site actually feel this way. “I just dig the holes.” Joking or not, it reminded me that it can be easy to get focused on our given task and rely on others to manage the peripheral issues.

What I hear most often, and what was echoed in that gentleman's comment, is when the boss tells you the site is clear to work, you show up and go to work. You show up with the assumption that everything not related to your particular job duties on a site have been taken care of. This prompted me to look at my presentation and ask, “But what if it hasn't?”

Were underground utility issues covered during a site survey and safety briefings to ensure workers are fully aware of the risks and hazards of known and possibly unknown underground utilities? Is there an accessible copy of the locate ticket on site showing which utilities have responded and which utilities they should expect to see marked in the area? Are they aware that maybe a listed utility did not enter a response on the locate ticket even though the ticket is now valid and open for work? Were these issues discussed and pointed out?

If this information is not provided to workers onsite, do they know how to use our online ticket portal to look up the locate ticket for that job from their phone and verify the utility responses?

Are they aware if they see evidence of, or discover an unmarked utility, they should be reporting it to a supervisor and that a Second Notice should be made to 811 before they start excavation?

I have to thank my commenter for the inspiration to adjust my presentation to focus more on the actions individuals can take, owning their own safety and the overall safety of their co-workers around underground utilities. And, by the way, we know you do more than just dig the holes! 



Are You Well-Grounded?



By **Dean Anderson**, Damage Prevention Liaison East Tennessee, Tennessee 811

Are you well-grounded? The phrase opens up a wealth of possibilities for exploration. It can reference one's physical or mental well-being, reflecting a firm grasp of who you are as an individual and a sense of balance in life. It asks whether we are rational, reasonable, logical, and well-founded, demonstrating thorough knowledge and skill in a particular subject.

In the utility locating industry, being “well-grounded” takes on a more specific meaning. It refers to having a solid foundation in locating theory, supported by relevant, hands-on experience. This combination ensures that every aspect of the job is carefully considered, leaving nothing overlooked. At the core of this is an understanding of how Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) work and the importance of completing a circuit with minimal distortion in the EMF.

There's often a fine line between a successful, accurate locate, and one where the markings are either slightly off the safety zone or outside the acceptable tolerance. These miscalculations can lead to near misses or even damage to the utility infrastructure. A critical factor in this process is the placement of the ground rod – positioned 90 degrees to the target utility – relative to other utilities in the area. If the ground rod is too close to other underground utilities, it can cause interference, with EMF distortion extending 10 to 20 feet and potentially bleeding over, leading to inaccurate locates or accidental damage during excavation. Proper placement of the ground rod along with clear mapping is essential

to ensuring both safety and accuracy in the locating process.

Another often overlooked factor that can distort the electromagnetic field in utility locating is the soil. The current must return to the source (the transmitter) via the ground rod, and the soil's type, compaction, conductivity, and makeup can all significantly affect this process. For example, soil conductivity can vary depending on the season – soil tends to be more conductive in the spring compared to the drier months of summer, with both scenarios influenced by the moisture content in the ground. Let's take a closer look at how soil moisture affects the line locating process:

1. Higher moisture content = higher conductivity: The moisture in the soil, which contains electrolytes, allows electricity to flow more easily through the ground, improving the signal's strength and accuracy.

2. Dry soil = higher resistance: When soil is dry, it becomes more resistant to electrical flow. In such conditions, establishing a good signal can be more challenging and you may need to introduce moisture (such as a water, detergent, and salt mixture) to enhance conductivity. Some of you might wonder what this mixture is and why it's useful. This mixture works best in soils that have low natural conductivity, such as:


1. Sandy soils: These tend to have low conductivity because they have fewer particles that can retain water or nutrients. The added salt and water increase

conductivity by enhancing the soil's electrolytic properties.

2. Dry or low-moisture soils: These soils lack sufficient natural moisture, making them more resistant to electrical flow. Adding water and salt helps increase conductivity and improve locate accuracy.

3. Clay soils (low permeability): While clay soils are typically more conductive due to their mineral content and ability to retain water, certain types of clay can have lower conductivity when dry or compacted. In these cases, the added moisture and salt mixture can help enhance conductivity.

As we know, water is a good conductor of electricity, particularly when it contains dissolved substances like salts. Salt acts as an electrolyte, increasing the soil's conductivity while the dish detergent works as a surfactant. This lowers the surface tension of the water, allowing it to spread more easily through the soil and penetrate areas with lower conductivity. Salt, often sodium chloride, further enhances the conductivity by allowing electricity to flow more efficiently through the soil.

In summary, being well-grounded in both knowledge and practice is essential for success in utility locating. By understanding the science behind electromagnetic fields, recognizing the importance of proper ground rod placement, and considering environmental factors like soil conductivity, we can ensure more accurate locates and prevent costly mistakes. So, I ask once more—are you well-grounded? 

Damage Prevention MVP We're Looking For A Few Good Men & Women

By **Jason Fryer**, Damage Prevention Liaison Middle TN, Tennessee 811



Like the Uncle Sam poster that was famously used to recruit Americans to enlist in the U.S. Army for World War I, we too are looking for some qualified individuals who go above and beyond...in damage prevention.

In my seven years of writing magazine articles, I have covered some wonderful men and women who represent some fantastic organizations from different stakeholder groups in the excavation, locating, and utility industries. We like to get recommendations from our customers so we can spotlight how that person or

company helped reduce damage while keeping their communities safe. Here are the ways some of our previous Damage Prevention MVPs have demonstrated excellence in damage prevention.

Relationships

It takes everyone working together to get the job done safely. Whether it's a utility operator working with a professional excavator, or a locator working with a contractor, relationships are important. Those relationships are not always formed overnight - it takes time and effort. There are going to be times when we disagree with one another and sometimes we must come up with a compromise. At the end of the day, we should all be willing to help each other to complete our work.

Communication


This one goes hand in hand with relationships. When someone enters a locate request, Tennessee 811 notifies member utilities to mark or otherwise respond to the locate request. Maybe the locator gets out to the job site but they don't quite understand the marking instructions. If there is a good contact number on the ticket, the locator should reach out to the person or company to ask for additional information. Or maybe on the flip side, an excavator gets to a job site and

notices something is not marked correctly based on the information provided. The excavator would need to reach out to the locator and explain it was done incorrectly. This could help both sides form a stronger relationship and have better communication.

Safety

Reducing utility damages is only part of an MVP's concern for safety. Safety is paramount in our industry. No one wants their employees to get injured or worse, have a fatal accident. Everyone I have featured has always been safety driven. Whether that is a tailgate talk, wearing proper PPE, or putting together a public awareness event, safety is the life blood of what we all do.

Knowledge & Technology

Throughout our careers we learn important job functions, processes, and knowledge regarding our positions. We learn from our mistakes as much as we learn from our successes. I've never been a locator, but when I have featured a few locators as our Damage Prevention MVPs, one thing that resonates with me is their knowledge of their utility system. The same could go for an excavator and understanding how they can productively get a job done safely and on time. With that, many of our Damage Prevention MVPs are using new equipment to work safely and enhance productivity. Whether that's a new locating device that penetrates the ground or using the newest drone technology to fly over a job site during pre-construction. Knowledge and technology are critical in the damage prevention world. 

WE WANT YOU to be our next Damage Prevention MVP! If you know someone in your company that fits the bill, or maybe someone you work with in the field, I would love to spotlight them in a future edition of this magazine. Please contact me by email at jfryer@tennessee811.com.



Call Center Stats

Incoming (Q1-Q4)
2023: 1,048,792
2024: 1,077,815

Outgoing (Q1-Q4)

2023: 5,380,320
2024: 5,479,584

Call Ratio (O/I)

2023: 5.13
2024: 5.08

Operational Numbers

Avg Daily Tickets (Q1-Q4)

2023: 2,918
2024: 2,945

New Members (Q4)

Club Wyndham Resort at Fairfield Glade
Wartrace, Town of
West Lauderdale Water
West Kentucky Rural Electric

Alberta's Alternate Locate Provider Program

By **Mike Sullivan**, President, Utility Safety Partners



**Scan To
Learn More**

August 1, 2024, will go down in Alberta's damage prevention history as the day when the digging community finally had a locating and marking option. After over two years of work, the Alternate Locate Provider (ALP) program was officially launched in Alberta!

Before explaining more about the ALP, you need to understand how we got here.

All communities, from small towns to major urban centres, are serviced by distribution energy and utility assets which appear on the majority of locate tickets. Decades ago in Alberta, those utility asset owners formed locate consortiums in major urban centres to dispatch a single locator rather than each utility dispatching its respective locate and marking resource. It was a great idea and it worked – but challenges arose. While this approach was initially effective, it eventually encountered challenges. Consortium locator contracts inadvertently created bottlenecks, limiting locator capacity and causing recurring delays. In a climate where the digging season is interrupted by the cold winter months, and a year's worth of digging projects get jammed into an 8-month span, delays can be horrific, and a better option was necessary. A Task Force was established to find a solution.

After investigating different processes in Canada and abroad, the Task Force developed the Alternate Locate Provider


Program. To uphold the paramount integrity of the locating and marking process, a locating and marking training standard was developed and beta-tested by subject matter experts. And, on the heels of that, a Locate Service Provider assessment protocol was also developed. In short, to be registered as an ALP locate service provider (LSP), and have their contact information appear on USP's website, the LSP must successfully complete USP-endorsed training and third-party audit.

The ALP locate request is submitted through Utility Safety Partners' standard ticket creation process by selecting "YES" in the Alternate Locate Provider Option field (scan the QR code to see just how easy it is). Once submitted, the ticket requestor works directly with their selected Alternate Locate Service Provider from USP's website to complete locates for members participating in the ALP Program. Members not participating in the ALP Program will receive a copy of the ticket and respond to the request following normal procedures.

Why is the ALP such a game-changer? At its core, it presents the digging community with an option – an alternative way to have locates completed. Instead of being bound by the constraints of the traditional consortium model, the ALP opens the field to a broader range of approved locate service providers. This not only increases capacity but also allows for more direct communication between the excavator and the locator, which is

crucial for understanding the specifics of each project. Also, the Alternate Locate Service Provider works directly for the project owner on their timeline and can serve to reduce unnecessary downtime.

One of the most significant outcomes of the ALP is the approval of over 130 experienced and qualified new locators (as of February 2025) to meet the demands of Alberta's busy digging season – an unprecedented increase in capacity. The ALP doesn't just add more locators – it adds highly trained professionals who have undergone a rigorous assessment protocol to ensure they meet the high standards required to maintain the integrity of the process. And to date, there have been no damages reported where the ALP process was chosen – the most notable and important metric.

Utility Safety Partners will be presenting on Alberta's Alternate Locate Provider Program in Dallas, TX during the Global Damage Prevention Summit September 16-18, 2025. For more information, visit ACTSNowInc.com/globaldps. 

GLOBAL
damage prevention
summit
A Division of ACTS

from the desk of **CHRIS STOVALL**

Chris Stovall, President & CEO, Texas811



I want to take a moment to reflect on our shared successes in 2024 and the progress we've made together. This past year has been a testament to the dedication, innovation, and collaboration that define Texas811 and the broader damage prevention community. We saw unprecedented participation from our members, industry partners, and communities. Increased collaboration led to greater safety awareness and improved excavation practices statewide. This year marked a major leap forward in excavation safety with the integration of fiber optic sensing technology into the One Call system. Through our partnership with Centerpoint and LUNA Innovations, we successfully tested a system that detects unauthorized digging in real-time and alerts utility operators for rapid intervention. Additionally, our enhancements to our core 811 system, GeoCall, has made

the process of submitting a locate request both faster and safer than previous versions. Our training programs, workshops, and industry events reached more professionals than ever before. By equipping excavators, utility operators, and stakeholders with the latest best practices, we continue to reduce incidents and promote a culture of safety.

Building on the momentum of 2024, we are committed to driving further innovation and collaboration. Texas811 will enhance stakeholder support by integrating AI-driven solutions like Amazon Q into its call center operations. This initiative will streamline call handling, reduce wait times, and improve accuracy, ensuring that excavators, utility operators, and homeowners receive faster, more reliable assistance while maintaining the high level of service and personal engagement that Texas811 is known for. Expanding our public awareness campaigns to include direct community access to our 811 center will continue to highlight the importance of safe digging practices and damage prevention in a new way—hands on learning and community education. Texas811 will launch a state-of-the-art mobile app designed to revolutionize the locate request process with an entirely new approach. This innovative app will feature an intuitive, user-friendly interface that allows excavators, contractors, and homeowners to submit locate requests in just a few taps.

As always, our success is driven by you, our dedicated members and industry partners. Your commitment to safety, accountability, and innovation has made 2024 a tremendous success, and I am excited for what we will accomplish together in 2025.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication. Let's continue making Texas a leader in damage prevention and safety.



2024: A Year in Review

By **Jennifer Pratt**, Program Manager, Damage Prevention Council of Texas

The Damage Prevention Council of Texas (DPC of Texas) is a testament to the collaborative efforts of industry pioneers who envisioned a statewide damage prevention program. In 2008, these efforts coalesced into a centralized campaign, combining the work of various UCC and LEPC damage prevention subcommittees under one statewide cooperative. Stakeholders benefit from DPC chapter meetings, which provide a valuable platform for sharing information, exchanging perspectives, and collaborating on damage prevention solutions. Regional DPC chapters encourage participation from all interested individuals.

As a registered 501(c)(3) organization, the DPC of Texas brings together a diverse collective of industry leaders and stakeholders, including contractors, utility and pipeline operators, municipalities, locators, excavators, engineers, and other dedicated industry volunteers.

What We Do

Our team of industry leaders serve as subject matter experts and facilitate meetings. Chapters meet regularly throughout Texas and provide an optimal forum where stakeholders can share information and perspectives while working together on all damage prevention issues. In promoting a spirit of shared responsibility, DPC chapters welcome all who would like to participate in damage prevention solutions.

Chapter Meetings

In 2024, we had an average of 30 attendees at our 84 chapter meetings, with over 2,500 attendees statewide. In addition, the DPC of Texas had 562 first-time attendees at 84 chapter meetings, for an average of 6.7 first-time attendees at each meeting.

Excavation Safety Days

In 2024, we held nine excavation safety days across the state. These nine events reached 1,850 people who were educated on safe digging practices. Our educational events offer a unique learning experience, integrating classroom sessions with practical outdoor demonstrations. Participants gain valuable knowledge on topics ranging from trench safety regulations to the importance of the One Call law. Our dedicated Excavation Safety Day provides a distinct and impactful perspective on the risks of excavating near underground utilities. In 2024, we were able to train and educate a total of 4,411 stakeholders through chapter meetings, excavation safety days, and workshops.

Financial Support


Sponsors provide critical funding that enables the DPC of Texas to fulfill its mission of saving lives, property, and the environment, alongside support from grant funds. We cannot meet our mission without the support of our annual corporate sponsors and our numerous event sponsors. The DPC of Texas achieved considerable financial success in 2024 through its fundraising initiatives, including the annual golf tournament and educational events. The DPC of Texas also benefits from grant funding, allowing direct investment in mission-related activities, such as expanded educational and public awareness initiatives.

Board Governance

The DPC of Texas is governed by a diverse board of directors, including representatives from Texas811 staff and elected industry members. DPC of Texas Board Members act in the broad interest of all stakeholders and actively strive to meet our mission "To facilitate

underground utility and pipeline damage prevention, promote best practices, and contribute toward public safety and environmental protection through stakeholder education and communication."

Become a Member

By joining the DPC of Texas, you become part of a network of industry professionals promoting safe digging practices. Your involvement is invaluable as we work together to prevent damage and protect our communities. We welcome all stakeholders in the underground utility industry to join and experience the benefits of membership. 

Join the DPC of Texas



To learn more, visit
our website at
dpcoftexas.org.

Excavation Safety Days: Promoting Safe Digging Practices and Collaboration in Excavation

By **Jennifer Pratt**, Program Manager, Damage Prevention Council of Texas



The increasing prevalence of excavation projects related to utility installations, construction, and landscaping underscores the importance of safeguarding underground utility infrastructure. The DPC of Texas' Excavation Safety Day is a critical initiative to promote safe digging practices, mitigate the risk of accidents, and foster collaboration among stakeholders within the construction industry.

The Excavation Safety Day is the DPC of Texas' premiere event, allowing individuals to learn about topics that impact their daily work.

One Call System

Excavation Safety Days emphasize the

importance of the "One Call" system, a centralized service that provides a mechanism for contractors and excavators to notify utility operators of impending excavation activities. This notification enables the location and marking of subsurface utilities before the commencement of work, thereby mitigating the risk of accidental damage. Furthermore, Excavation Safety Days address potential challenges associated with the One Call system, including missed markings, delayed locates, and inaccurate information, to enhance its reliability.

Pre-Excavation Planning

Proper planning constitutes a fundamental aspect of safe excavation practices. Excavation Safety Day encourages stake-



SAVE THE DATE

2025 ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

MOODY GARDENS GOLF COURSE

WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 1, 2025

\$125/PERSON | \$450/TEAM

**1700 SYDNOR LANE
GALVESTON, TEXAS**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 22, 2025**



FREE VIRTUAL TRAINING

LIVING AND WORKING NEAR PIPELINES IN TEXAS

Topics Covered

- Underground Infrastructure
- Products and Delivery
- Natural Gas and Pipeline Integrity
- Planning and Site Preparation
- Execution of Safe Worksite Excavation

90-minute modular course
Certificate issued upon completion

Made possible through PHMSA TAG Funding



holders to conduct comprehensive site investigations to identify potential subsurface hazards and utilities. Developing a detailed excavation plan incorporating the use of hand tools, safe digging zones, and appropriate equipment is essential for ensuring a safer working environment.

Outdoor Demos

Excavation Safety Day actively engages the community through diverse educational events designed for contractors, utility operators, and the public. While some events feature outdoor demonstrations of safe digging techniques and the latest equipment, other formats may be employed. The common thread is an emphasis on adhering to industry best practices.

Networking Opportunities

Excavation Safety Day serves as a valuable forum for networking and collaboration within the construction industry. Through this event, professionals are

afforded the opportunity to connect with peers, exchange experiences, and engage in discussions pertaining to the challenges and solutions associated with safe excavation practices. This collaborative approach promotes a culture of continuous improvement and the dissemination of knowledge.

Excavation Safety Day is a pivotal initiative in promoting safe excavation practices, mitigating the risk of accidents, and fostering collaboration within the excavation industry. Through advocacy for the One Call system, providing outdoor demonstrations, disseminating trench safety information, and facilitating networking opportunities, Excavation Safety Day contributes to a safer and more efficient construction environment. As the construction industry continues to evolve, initiatives such as Excavation Safety Day will remain essential to safeguarding the well-being of workers and maintaining the integrity of underground utility infrastructure.

Stay tuned for more information on Excavation Safety Day events. Locations are subject to change. Stakeholders will be able to join us in one of the following locations:

**Houston
Austin
Plano
Tyler
Lubbock
Temple
Midland
Brownsville**



Upcoming Events

We look forward to seeing you at an event soon. Visit our website at www.dpcoftexas.org/upcoming-events or scan the QR code for a list of upcoming chapter meetings and Excavation Safety Day events in your area.

Registration now open!

Texas' Premier Damage Prevention Event

TEXAS811 
damage prevention
summit
A CGA REGIONAL PARTNER EVENT

October 13, 2025
Galveston Convention Center



Safety is a Core Value at Golden Pass

Call 811
before you dig in Texas.
Every time!



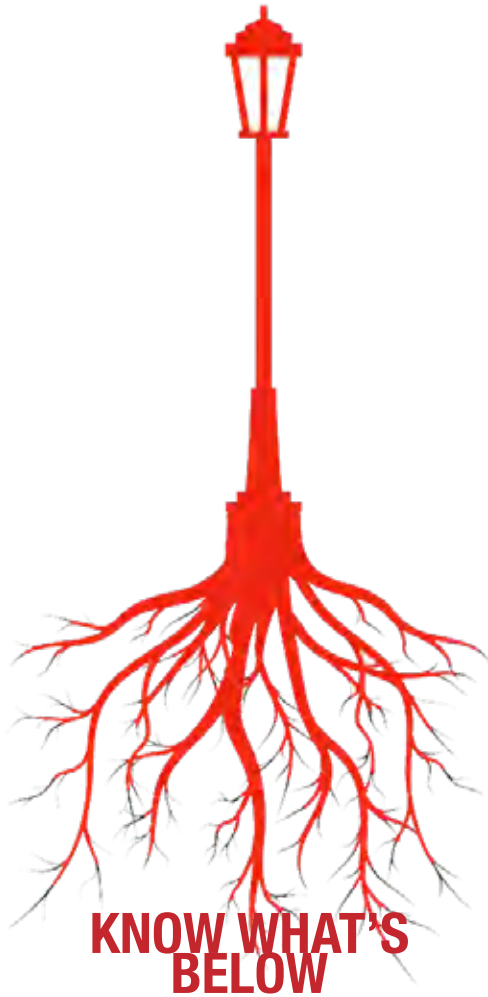
Golden Pass Pipeline 24-Hour Emergency Line
877.477.5564



Modern Roots March

Cultivating a Culture of Damage Prevention

By: **Benjamin Dierker**, Executive Director, Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure (Aii)



This March, the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure (Aii), a nonprofit think tank, is sowing the seeds of transformation with its fifth annual Modern Roots March campaign. As a prelude to April and National Safe Digging Month, this initiative serves to build the public's intuition and awareness about safe excavation practices. Designed to prime individuals and organizations alike, Modern Roots March ensures that the critical messaging of Safe Digging Month reaches a broader audience and takes root early.

This year's campaign is particularly significant as it coincides with the 20th anniversary of 811, the national call-before-you-dig number. This milestone

highlights the progress made in damage prevention over the past two decades while reinforcing the need for continued vigilance and innovation. With its Modern Roots March campaign, we celebrate this milestone by emphasizing the importance of collaboration, education, and technology in safeguarding infrastructure and lives and showcasing the men and women keeping us and our infrastructure safe.

The Foundation of Modern Life

At its core, Modern Roots March underscores the importance of our infrastructure. Water, gas, electricity, internet, sewage, and roadways are critical systems we rely on every day, and they all have roots. So much of what makes the world function correctly runs beneath our feet. For many, these roots of infrastructure are out of sight, out of mind, but Modern Roots March is all about creating awareness of these crucial foundations of modern life.

It's this simple: You see a tree and know it has a root system. When you see modern infrastructure, you should know it has modern roots too!

By raising awareness and building up momentum for Safe Digging Month, the campaign encourages communities to observe the world around them and reflect on the importance of our underground infrastructure as well as the ways we can protect it. Protecting infrastructure is not just for professionals; it requires investment from all of us.

Communication is Key

Damage prevention is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration across utilities, excavators, policymakers, and the public. Modern Roots March promotes dialogue and communication to prevent damage and misunderstandings. Through the campaign, Aii helps facilitate discussion on the systemic challenges facing the industry, ensuring that solutions are effective and represent holistic advancement.

The 20th anniversary of 811 provides an ideal backdrop for this collaboration, celebrating two decades of progress while challenging stakeholders to envision the next chapter of damage prevention. This is not just a technical or regulatory issue, it is a responsibility that requires education, communication, and public engagement.

Aii wants to expand the knowledge of underground infrastructure protection beyond the industry by challenging people to think about where their water, internet, and electricity come from - the modern roots connecting their home to the grid and other systems. Millions of miles of pipes, cables, and wires run underneath our feet everywhere we go. Safeguarding our underground infrastructure is a collective effort that everyone, everywhere, must engage with.

Aii: Leading the Charge

As the nation's only infrastructure think tank, Aii continues to lead the charge in advancing safety, efficiency, and resilience. Its fifth annual Modern Roots March campaign not only celebrates the achievements of the past 20 years but also lays the groundwork for future progress. By helping plant the imagery of modern roots in March and promoting April's Safe Digging Month, the campaign ensures that the message of damage prevention remains front and center. Modern Roots March is more than a campaign—it's a reminder that the safety of our infrastructure relies on the strength of our roots: clear communication, continuous education, and awareness. Together, with industry leaders and community partners, Aii is positioning damage prevention as a fundamental pillar of modern infrastructure. ●

To learn more about Aii's Modern Roots March or join the movement, visit aii.org/modern-roots-march and reach out to bdierker@aii.org.

from the desk of **JERRY POAGE**

Jerry Poage, Executive Director, West Virginia 811



Welcome to the first issue of a new look damage prevention magazine that West Virginia 811 has participated in for 5 years. What used to be the West Virginia 811 Magazine is now part of the Global 811 Magazine.

We think you'll like the new format. More articles from around the globe focusing on damage prevention and we still have a section in the magazine that focuses on the stakeholders in West Virginia as we work together to reduce damages.

I'm starting my 3rd year as the Executive Director of WV811. I am grateful to those of you who have helped me get my feet on the ground. It has been a pleasure to learn from and work with you to take protecting our underground infrastructure to a higher level.

One of the things we've focused on is setting up training classes across the state to learn more about the West Virginia Dig Law and the enforcement process now in effect. If anyone needs to set up a training class, please reach out to me at 540-819-2093 or just email me at jerrypoage@wv811.com.

Also, we are setting up some excavator training classes throughout the state, so check out the WV811 website for dates and locations.

To expand our presence in the state, we will be attending or exhibiting at some expos/conferences that we haven't been to in quite a while. For example, the Home and Garden show, Global 811 Damage Prevention Summit in September and of course this year's State Fair. Did you know that this year is the 100th anniversary of West Virginia's Fair? I hope you can make that one. If you can, you'll see WV811, because we are going big for this special anniversary!

We are excited for the progress made in 2024 and expect even greater things in 2025! Let's continue to work together to protect our underground utility lines. You are the reason we are here. Let us know how we can best help you define what a successful project looks like where you live.

Dig Safe!



From the Damage Prevention Board

The West Virginia Damage Prevention board has hit the ground running for 2025. There are many things going on with damage prevention all through the state this year and we are really excited to see everyone. The Damage Prevention board has already been busy with education classes and also being in the field with contractors digging. The Board will be at several conferences in the upcoming months, as well as doing damage prevention safety training throughout the state.

Our next damage prevention conference will be a team effort with GO WV at their damage prevention meeting that will be held in Jane Lew, WV. Members from all over the state will come together with one mission in mind, Damage Prevention. The Board also will be in Charleston, WV for two days with the WV PSC to speak about damage prevention.

As always, please dig safe and remember, if you see something, say something. The board is always there to help in any way we can.

Brandon Hahn
Executive Secretary WV Damage Prevention Board

Upcoming WV Meetings and Events

National Safe Digging Month
April

GO WV safety day, Jane Lew
April 2nd

CGA conference, Orlando, FL
April 7th -10th

The West Virginia Damage Prevention Board Meeting
April 16 at 10:00 AM
206 Berkeley Street, Charleston

1st QTR WV811 meeting
April 24
Cacapon State Park



West Virginia's Damage Prevention Board's (WVDPB) complaint form or as some refer to it the Alleged Violation Report (AVR) form is loosely based on good damage investigation techniques. When someone submits the complaint (AVR), they identify who they are, the alleged violator, the alleged violation, the location, date and time of the alleged violation and are asked to submit documents to verify their complaint. All of these are fact-based requests. The Damage Prevention Board isn't asking you to point a finger at anybody who might be doing something wrong, they simply want to know the facts.

The WVDPB believes that most damages occur because the dig law is ignored. Failure to call before digging or not locating in a timely fashion routinely leads to unnecessary damages.

West Virginia's Damage Prevention Board is asking for your help in identifying stakeholders who routinely violate our dig law. Mostly, these people are good people who have developed some bad habits. It is not ok to dig without calling West Virginia 811 first. It is not ok to show up late to locate underground utilities. Let's work together to keep West Virginia a safer place to live and work. If not now, when? If not us, who? 🍌



All stakeholders are
accountable for
complying with
West Virginia's dig law.



To learn more about the dig law and the rules they operate under, go to

www.wvdpb.com

Reporting Complaints to the Damage Prevention Board

By now, many of you have heard that there is enforcement regarding West Virginia's dig law. For example, if someone is digging without a One Call ticket, that is a violation of current law and the violator can be held accountable for the violation. Some have asked the question, "How do I report someone who is violating our dig law?"

That's a fair question. In the Rules and Procedures adopted by the West Virginia Damage Prevention Board (WVDPB) Section 4-1-4 states that WV811 will provide a space on its website for individuals and facility owners to call and provide information regarding a violation. Additionally, Section 4-1-5 states that the board shall also receive complaints via US mail, telephone and email. An Alleged Violation Report (AVR) form was created for the web as stipulated in the Rules and Procedures to allow anyone to submit a complaint against a company/person who may in be violation of the state's dig law.

This form can be found on the Damage Prevention Board's website at www.wvdpb.com.

Some have asked, "When should I submit an AVR or when should I report someone who is violating the dig law?" To this question there is no right or wrong answer. From the earliest days of working to include enforcement (education and/or civil penalties) the idea of enforcement was promoted as a last resort. The hope was that stakeholders would continue to try to resolve issues in the field as they had done in the past and if resolution was not possible, enforcement was an additional step to be used to encourage behavioral change.

While you can submit a complaint by phone, mail or email, the advantage of submitting an AVR is it gives you a guide to provide information necessary to investigate the complaint. It also becomes available to the board or its representative as quickly as you hit the submit button.

This article will introduce you to the form and serve as a guide on how to properly fill it out.

- **Please note only one violation per form.**
- **You will notice a red asterisk beside some of the requested information.** This means that the field is required. While the other information is not required to fill out the form, it will assist in investigating or locating the alleged violation.

Section 1

Alleged Violation Report Form

Please Note: Only one violation per form.

* Your Name

* Your Company

* Your Street Address

Street Address Line 2

* City

* Postal / Zip Code

* Today's Date

* Your Phone Number



Scan to see the
entire reporting
form.

Section 1

This section of the form is your information. It requires you to enter your name and contact information including your email address and phone number. There could likely be questions regarding the complaint and without the proper contact information, it would be impossible to continue the investigation. Be sure to list your best contact information.



Ketha Molina Named Safety Professional



By **Jennifer Pratt**, Program Manager, Damage Prevention Council of Texas

How many of you have heard of the American Society of Safety Professionals or ASSP? ASSP is a global organization dedicated to occupational safety and health professionals. They have been serving safety professionals for more than 100 years offering education, advocacy, standards development, and a professional community that aims to help to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. As part of this community of safety professionals, Ketha Molina, Senior Damage Prevention Manager for Texas811 and the DPC of Texas Vice President, has served in multiple roles within ASSP leaving a lasting impact on its members.

In October of 2024, Ketha Molina was named Safety Professional of the Year for ASSP. In a letter sent to the Texas811 Leadership Team, ASSP had this to say about Ketha:

Ketha Molina, Senior Damage Prevention Manager for Texas811, was honored as the Region III Safety Professional of the Year by the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP). The award was presented during this year's awards ceremony in Hurst, Texas, celebrating Ketha's exceptional contributions to the safety profession.

Region III of ASSP encompasses Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, representing 13 chapters. Ketha emerged as the top choice from seven distinguished nominees, selected by the Region III Awards and Honors Committee. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their chapters, communities, and the safety profession over the past three years.

Ketha's recognition reflects her exemplary achievements, including:

Technical Expertise: A deep understanding of safety operations and a commitment to advancing safety practices.

Leadership and Advocacy: Serving as a key figure in the Permian Basin and South Plains Chapters, where she ensured their active engagement and growth. Under her leadership, both chapters earned Platinum status, the highest recognition in ASSP.

Professional Contributions: Delivering impactful training and workshops across Texas, including presentations at ASSP's National Leadership conference, and fostering professional development within the safety community.

Education and Innovation: Demonstrating an unwavering

dedication to educating the workforce through her expertise and certifications.

Ketha's work at Texas811 aligns seamlessly with ASSP's mission to enhance safety awareness and education. Her ability to engage audiences with insightful training and her influence as a chapter leader have solidified her role as a respected advocate for safety.

As Region III Safety Professional of the Year, Ketha is now eligible for consideration at the Society level, a testament to her continued excellence and leadership.

Congratulations, Ketha, on this well-deserved honor and thank you for all you do to keep workers safe around underground utilities! 🍊



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

The service is free & easy to use! Remember, it's the law.



**Before you dig,
KNOW the facts.**

Did you know that calling before you dig to find out the location of high-pressure pipelines and related facilities could save your life and prevent an accident that could be damaging to health, property and the environment?



Damage Prevention: The Unplanned Inspection

By **Greg Galle**, Conservation Program Manager, Louisiana Dept. of Energy and Natural Resources, Office of Conservation



Pipeliners, as well as other regulated professionals, have a great deal of experience being audited or inspected by a government regulator whether it be the State DENR, Commerce Division, Utility Regulatory, State Contractor's Board, etc.; we have all been there. When that inspection is scheduled, we make sure our office is a little less cluttered, we forgo our stained FR shirts for a crisper corporate polo, and we probably have our corporate compliance official onsite. All of our records are ready to go and there might even be a fresh pot of coffee. If our tough nosed, hard driving industry allows it, we may be considered "spiffy".

Out in the field, when a Damage Prevention inspector pops up at our construction or excavation site, we find that we lack that level of preparedness or "spiffiness". We have an operator running a backhoe, a driller on a directional rig, three guys with shovels, or even a blasting tech setting up a charge - and none prepared to answer questions. This visit may be an inspector making his or her rounds and just checking to see if

we have our mandatory 811 ticket. This could also be an inspector answering a complaint about an excavator without a ticket, or an inspector showing up after a report of a damage, or (hopefully not) responding to a line/utility strike.

Whatever the case, the inspector's appearance was unexpected and places whoever is on the jobsite in the role of compliance manager. With proper management and preparedness, this doesn't have to be a moment of anxiety. Excavation is sometimes an afterthought or a step in all the jobs that we do. We excavate as a step to install, remove, or repair. Excavation is crucial and dangerous, and if we change the mindset from a step to a job, our procedures and planning will make the unplanned inspection much smoother.

Excavations need to be planned out and involve communication with all stakeholders. James Baker, former U.S. Secretary of State, often used the "Five P" phrase; "Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance" (swap out Preparation with Planning and you'll see where I am going). Excavations need to start with an

idea of where we are excavating and the perils or impediments of that area such as soil conditions, overlay, and population. I work in Louisiana where everything is mostly flat and absent of stone, but we deal with a lot of marshy and wet excavation areas that may include different types of excavation or the need for floating equipment. More important is population. Are we excavating near a roadway, school, shopping mall, or hospital? Some excavation repairs require water, gas, electricity, or other vital needs to be disrupted for repair or some type of shifting. This may necessitate excavating at night or on weekends, and light sourcing may become an issue. Likewise, nighttime leaks and damages also create this need.

So, we know where we are excavating and have researched the conditions, but do we know the laws we need to follow?

Each State has individual dig laws and, while similar, may have differences that can impact your plans. I was recently on a site of a hydrovac excavation without an 811 ticket. The excavator told me that she didn't need a ticket for hydrovac in her state. Well, you're not in Kansas

anymore Toto, and that lack of preparation caused her to have to shut down, place a proper dig ticket, and wait the two full workdays (excluding weekends and holidays) to have the utilities located and marked so she could safely resume. Different states have different waiting periods for the “mark-by” times which is another reason to know your laws. This interruption cost her company a fine for the infraction. Add that fine to her and her partner’s down time, the cost of the unused equipment sitting idle, and her boss just coughed up a considerable, but avoidable, sum.

The waiting for that “mark-by” time is a considerable part of planning, as is contacting the owners of underground facilities along your excavation path to determine what underground impediments exist. You may also need some type of county/city construction permit. For larger projects, the best maneuver is to meet with the stakeholders or affected entities. One great way to do this is finding the local Utility Coordinating Council in your work area. Otherwise, any pre-construction meeting can eliminate a lot of surprises on the back end.

When placing your 811/Dig Ticket, make sure you plan to excavate in a timely manner to match the timelines set out in your State’s Dig Law (for example, some states have 20-day tickets, some have 30 or otherwise). No two excavations are identical and most Dig Tickets give you the opportunity to put special remarks in the ticket. This is one of the most underutilized parts of the equation. Place as many remarks as needed to build an adequate picture of your excavation plans. The contact names and numbers on a ticket are also crucial. To have a desk clerk in Indiana place a ticket and put his/her name and phone number on the ticket for an excavation

in Florida makes no sense. Our pipeline operators need to have an onsite contact should they experience a drop in pressure at their control room or get a notification of gas smell or utility outages in an area. This contact helps pinpoint the problem and helps dictate response. I highly recommend companies that have an office outside their local work area, to have someone intimately familiar with the job as a contact.

While communication with outside stakeholders is important, so is internal communications. Team meetings prior to excavation are necessary to ensure that equipment is operable, equipment operators are knowledgeable and possess whatever certifications are needed, and personnel is familiar with the actual laws pertaining to tolerance zones and excavation requirements. For instance, some states require potholing over some or all pipelines and utilities - this would be an important note for everyone at the excavation site.

A Dig Ticket is not a secret government form. It needs to be shared with your staff. Most times at an excavation site when I ask the foreman for his Dig Ticket number, he has to call the office. This always prompts me to ask “Did you review the ticket yourself?” and rarely do I get a positive answer. This is part of planning and not the onsite Job Safety Analysis. It is important for those excavating employees to know if they are shoveling over a ¾” natural gas distribution service line as opposed to a 16” hydrogen line or even a telecommunications line that may impact the 9-1-1 system. The Dig Ticket may also contain the name and number of an operator’s rep who would like to be on the job site when you are digging over their facility. Having the rep onsite to help guide you is a big safety measure.

Planning should also include the perils of hitting those underground obstacles. Jumping off your backhoe and clearing the area as opposed to taking the time to drive it out may be an important measure. Make sure the 9-1-1 operator has a clear picture of what just happened, and never attempt to bend over, squeeze off, splice, or repair a damage. Contact the operator to properly and legally repair the pipeline damage and realize that you are in stand-by mode while giving that operator clearance to complete the repair.

More recently we have come across language barriers in the construction and excavation community. It has not been unusual to pull up to a site where no one speaks English. This also signals to me that the excavator who may be digging in conflict with peril, has probably not read the English generated Dig Ticket. In a non-exigent situation, I have time to use a translator application on my phone or to get someone who can interpret on the phone. While English may be the primary language of emergency response in many areas, recognizing and respecting diverse language needs can improve communication and enhance overall safety.

Excavation operators should know every pipeline or utility in conflict and how to deal with the repercussions of coming into contact with those facilities. With knowledge and planning in place, you no longer have to dread a visit from the State inspector. You know how to properly and legally excavate in the state that he/she is representing, and you have the knowledge and information to answer pertinent questions about the job. With proper communication and the 5 P’s, your site should be a much safer environment for the underground facility operators, the public, and your employees. ●





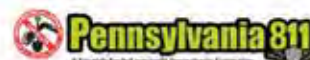
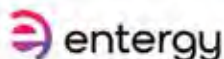
ACTS Company Members make the ACTS mission possible by supporting the continued growth of this incredible community, over 2,000 individual members and growing. Scan the QR code to view the benefits of becoming an individual and company ACTS member, supporting damage prevention and excavation safety year-round.



www.actshowinc.com/member



American Petroleum Institute



29% of pipeline damages occur because
NO ONE CALLED



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

every time!

KINDER MORGAN

Before you dig,
dig this.

Pipeline safety starts from the ground up.



Always call 811 before you dig. It's the law.

Get more pipeline safety information at
xtoenergy.com.





Leading with Vision

Kesley Tweed and the Future of Pipeline Safety



Kesley Tweed, Executive Director of the Pipeline Association for Public Awareness (PAPA), has been named the 2025 Q1 Damage Prevention Hero! Tweed's unwavering dedication to public safety and innovative approach to damage prevention have made a significant impact on the industry.

Throughout her career, Tweed has demonstrated a true drive for finding unique ways to engage stakeholders. "Kesley has been passionate about finding inspiring and creative ways to engage with the public...to enhance public safety, improve emergency preparedness, protect the environment, and prevent damage to property and facilities," says Ryan Nelson, Damage Prevention Program Specialist at Enbridge.

Tweed's leadership at PAPA has been transformative. "With her extensive background in strategic communications, stakeholder engagement, and public outreach in the pipeline industry, she has transformed the way we connect with key audiences," explains Dillon Ohrt, SR/WA, Right of Way and Public Awareness Coordinator at Suncor Energy (U.S.A.) Pipeline Company.

Under Tweed's guidance, PAPA has embraced new technologies to enhance its outreach efforts. "She has championed the use of new technology, such as geofencing, to enhance our message's reach and impact," says Ohrt. This innovative approach, combined with Tweed's focus on fostering collaborations, has brought new voices into the damage prevention conversation.

Tweed's impact extends beyond technological advancements. She has revitalized existing programs, such as developing additional in-language safety materials and expanding online training videos. "She's brought new life to long-standing, well-established programs with her experienced perspective and drive for continuous growth," says Courtney Jordt, Damage Prevention Specialist, Pacific Gas & Electric Co.

Tweed is also a strong advocate for 811, presenting at CGA Conferences and guiding pipeline and utility operators in the development of the annual excavator magazine. Lori Warner, Former President of PAPA and retired Public Safety Coordinator at Xcel Energy, emphasizes Tweed's leadership qualities: "Kesley is a strategic and innovative leader that is open to ideas and a true champion for pipeline and utility safety and awareness."

Tweed's commitment to public safety extends beyond her professional role. She is a passionate life/career coach, dedicated to helping others live fulfilling lives. This dedication to personal and professional growth further exemplifies her commitment to enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities.

Kesley Tweed's innovative leadership, unwavering dedication to public safety, and commitment to continuous improvement make her a true Damage Prevention Hero. Her contributions to the industry have had a profound impact, and her influence will continue to inspire future generations of damage prevention professionals. ●



Join us in
our commitment to safety.

Call before you dig.

www.linde.com
Making our world
more productive



Damage Prevention Professional Certificate Program...It's Time! ✓

By **Jeff Mulligan**, Chair, USP Training Standards Committee,
Chief Operating Officer, ASTEC Safety Inc.

I came from the financial services and municipal government sectors where legislation, regulatory oversight, and clearly delineated specialist designations were commonplace. Not to say that when I entered the industrial safety space we were wanting for more regulations, rules, or fancy titles, but as I got a clearer and almost laser-focused view of the damage prevention landscape, something was missing...

The PEOPLE...Yes, when it came to Damage Prevention Professionals, I struggled to discern a highly qualified professional from the pack, could not identify their specific area of expertise, nor what they had achieved en route to claiming the title/role of a Damage Prevention Professional. At the same time, a wide array of professional designations and certifications were embraced by the industrial safety and occupational health sectors, while dedicated long-term practitioners of damage prevention seemed almost homeless, simply looking for the recognition and career path options of many of their industry peers.

The BUSINESS CASE...So if that's the emotional or personal connection to the concept of the Damage Prevention Professional Certificate, the real driver is an exploding (pardon the pun) era of invaluable mission critical buried infrastructure that we all have a shared responsibility to care for. Billions of dollars,

countless lives, and practically everyone relying on the undisturbed preservation of the foundational services provided by this buried infrastructure we take for granted in our modern society.

What we see is a rapidly evolving infrastructure environment that will be best protected by trained, qualified, and passionate Damage Prevention Professionals. The crossroads, if you will, calling us to come together to elevate the profile of both the industry and the competency of the people who dedicate themselves to enhancing the best practices employed when working near buried infrastructure.

The PROGRAM...Enter an idea that like many professional associations, certificate programs, and approving organizations that independently administer a certification program based on criteria and pre-requisites defined by the best in the industry, there is a Damage Prevention certification that ensures persons achieving accreditation have exceeded the requirements while continuing to satisfy the on-going professional development standards set out by industry leaders. This is the vision of Utility Safety Partners (USP) and their stakeholders when describing the Damage Prevention Professional Certification Program "DPP".

Operating under the guidance and governance of the Stakeholder Advisory Group, USP personnel will develop, market, and

administer the three pillar professional designation program. The program will feature CORE/Required subject area courses, augmented by Electives that are discipline specific, defined by stakeholder group or buried asset type; ie: Telecom vs. Oil & Gas, or Excavators & Contractors, Locators, or perhaps Shallow vs. Deep, or Regulators & Government, to name a few. Of course, obtaining a certificate because at a point-in-time you satisfied some static curriculum requirements, is good, but not great. Many programs today call for on-going professional commitment evidenced by continuing professional development, participation in the organization, or competency milestones, and it is our vision for the Damage Prevention Professional Program, that the third pillar will be the accumulation of required CEU Credits on an on-going basis to maintain the program certification designation.

The program must be independent of for-profit corporate motives and government funding sources, both of which are subject to influences that should not affect the on-going integrity or focus of the Damage Prevention Professional Certificate Program that so many individuals and corporations will come to count on as the program matures.

Balancing the need for the DPP program to maintain reasonable personnel expenditures and a realistic workload to achieve certification is foundational to the future success of the program. With the program comprised of 6-10 CORE Required courses, and up to 4 Pre-Requisite Electives, largely completed through online self-paced interactive training programs, we envision damage prevention specialists with 1-3 years of experience realizing full certification with approximately 100 hours of course completion. This will be followed by 8-16 hours of pre-requisite activity engagement per year, thereafter, to maintain their Damage Prevention Professional Certification.

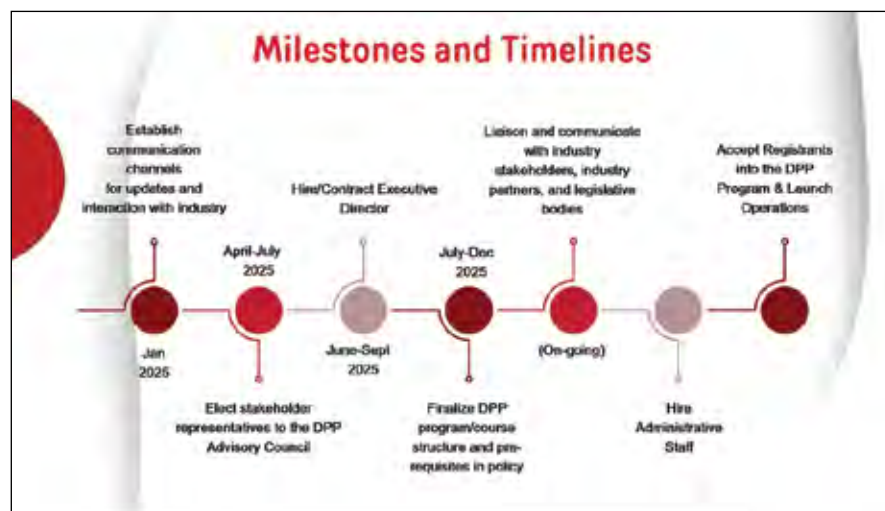
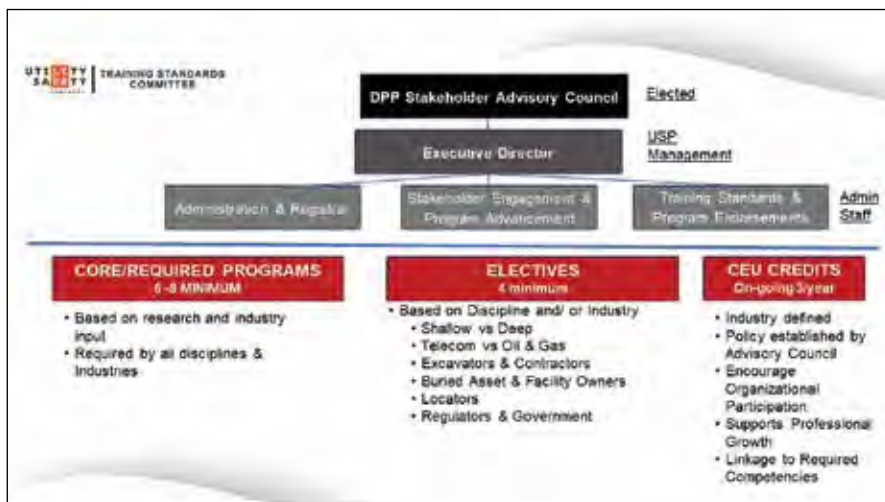
Where do the courses come from that form the curriculum? The topic areas or



content focus areas will be defined by the Stakeholder Advisory Group, who will oversee the USP personnel that comprise the administrative team dedicated to the DPP program. The DPP program will leverage the experience of the Training Standards Committee, when necessary, to develop “TRAINING STANDARDS” for required courses. Once published, the STANDARDS clearly define the content that professional training organizations utilized when they choose to develop training programs for assessment through the 3 Stage Audit process leading to full “USP Training Program Endorsement”.

The TIMELINE... We already said; “It’s Time”, and maybe it is even overdue, so we need to come together to sustain industry-wide momentum, supported by employers, contractors, regulators, and infrastructure owners, alike, to take a monumental leap forward in the certification of our most scarce resources...the DAMAGE PREVENTION PROFESSIONALS of today and tomorrow!

Over the next 18-24 months stay tuned for updates, activities, milestones, and most importantly, how you or your organization can become active partners in the Damage Prevention Professional Certification program. It’s Time for our people, our industry and our future! 🍊



BOARDWALK®
PIPELINES

**Safety below fuels
reliable energy above.**



bwpipelines.com



SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS.
EVERY DIG. EVERY TIME.

Reducing the \$4.6 Billion Impact of Utility Strikes in Australia

By **Mell Greenall**, CEO, Before You Dig Australia Ltd

Utility strikes remain a persistent challenge for Australia's excavation and infrastructure sectors, with over 15,000 reported incidents annually. These strikes not only disrupt essential services like gas, water, electricity, and telecommunications, but also incur an immense economic cost: \$4.6 billion AUD each year.

While the direct repair costs, estimated at a minimum \$138 million per year, are significant, they are only the tip of the iceberg. Indirect and social costs—service interruptions, delays to projects, traffic disruptions, and lost business productivity—account for the lion's share of this financial burden. Addressing these issues requires collaboration across the industry to improve systems, adopt better practices, and align regulations to mitigate this unnecessary expense.

The Scale of the Problem

The true impact of utility strikes goes far beyond repair costs. For every \$1 spent on direct repairs, an additional \$32.40 is lost to indirect and social costs. Despite the availability of tools like Before You Dig Australia's (BYDA) utility location service, reliance on outdated data, inconsistent legislative frameworks, and insufficient workforce training continue to result in preventable damage.

Compounding the issue is the uneven reporting of utility strikes. The 15,000 incidents reported annually are likely a conservative estimate, with many smaller strikes going unreported. The fragmented approach to utility management across states, paired with subpar data quality, makes project planning a minefield for excavators and asset owners alike.

Case Studies: The Ripple Effects of Strikes

Utility strikes are more than operational setbacks—they create ripple effects across communities and industries. Two examples demonstrate their real-world impacts:

- **Water Main Damage:** A jackhammer punctured a water main, disrupting supply to 29 customers, including a childcare center and a medical facility for two hours. While the direct repair cost was \$4,391, traffic management, business interruptions, and the inconvenience to residents pushed the total cost to over \$12,000.
- **Telecommunications Outage:** A fiber-optic cable strike affected nearly 5,000 customers for four hours, resulting in widespread disruptions to businesses reliant on connectivity. Although the repair cost was just \$6,044, the economic impact soared to \$420,000, reflecting the heavy reliance on uninterrupted communications infrastructure.

These cases highlight the disproportionate consequences of seemingly minor strikes, with downstream effects on businesses, residents, and critical infrastructure.

Root Causes: Why Strikes Happen

The reasons behind Australia's high rate of utility strikes can be traced to three core issues:

1. **Fragmented Legislation:** Only New South Wales requires mandatory registration of underground utilities with BYDA and enforces the use of its service for excavation projects. Other states lack consistent rules, leading to gaps in asset data and regulatory oversight.
2. **Low-Quality Utility Data:** Many utilities rely on outdated systems, with maps



The true impact of utility strikes goes far beyond repair costs. For every \$1 spent on direct repairs, an additional \$32.40 is lost to indirect and social costs.

often provided in low-accuracy PDF formats (classified as Quality Level D). These inaccuracies increase the likelihood of misjudgements during excavation.

- 3. **Insufficient Training:** Utility risk management training is neither standardized nor mandatory in Australia, leaving workers underprepared to navigate underground hazards. BYDA estimates that over 3,000 strikes annually could be avoided with better training.


Zero damage - Zero harm - Zero disruption

Actionable Recommendations for the Industry

To reduce the frequency and cost of utility strikes, the BYDA report offers three key recommendations:

1. Nationally Consistent Legislation

Streamlining underground asset management laws across states would ensure that all assets are registered with BYDA and that excavators are required to access this data before breaking ground. A uniform framework would improve compliance and data consistency, reducing utility strikes by 7% and saving \$322 million annually.

2. Establishing a Digital Asset Register

Transitioning to a high-accuracy, centralized digital platform would address the current reliance on outdated and inconsistent mapping methods. A national register with minimum data standards could reduce strikes by 17%, saving \$782 million per year. This approach aligns with successful international models, such as the UK's National Underground Asset Register, which has proven its ability to streamline excavation planning and reduce risks.

Compounding the issue is the uneven reporting of utility strikes. The 15,000 incidents reported annually are likely a conservative estimate, with many smaller strikes going unreported.

3. Improved Training for Excavators

Introducing mandatory utility risk management training for all construction and trade workers could prevent thousands of strikes annually. By embedding risk management modules into industry certifications and apprenticeship programs, the workforce would be better equipped to handle complex underground environments. This measure alone could reduce strikes by 8%, resulting in \$368 million in savings each year.

By adopting these measures, the industry could reduce utility strikes by 30%, saving the economy \$1.38 billion annually. This level of collaboration would not only mitigate economic losses but also enhance Australia's infrastructure resilience. Utility strikes are an expensive and preventable problem. While excavators and utility owners are familiar with the risks and challenges, the \$4.6 billion annual cost is a wake-up call to the industry. With unified legislation, modernized data systems, and mandatory training, the frequency of utility strikes in Australia can be dramatically reduced. The solutions are within reach; it's now up to the industry to dig in and make them a reality. ●



UTILITY & PIPELINE LOCATOR TRAINING



EXCAVATION SAFETY TRAINING



FULL OSHA CONSTRUCTION LIBRARY



UTA DISTANCE LEARNING CENTER



WORK SMARTER!

888-882-8777

info@utasearch.com

www.damagepreventiontraining.com

OUR MARK IS
OUR WORD!

811 Locating
Private utility locating
Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)
Customized solutions

Sole source locating
On time, every time
Customer service focused

Benchmark
Subsurface Utility Services

www.benchmarkllc.us
804-550-2418

From Crisis to Culture Shift: Transforming the Damage Prevention Industry

By **Nick Bonstell**, CEO, MISS DIG 811

The intersection of excavation, utilities, technology, and public safety stands at a pivotal juncture in our pursuit of zero injuries and a reduction in underground facility damages. We have all experienced the devastating outcomes of crisis and the positive, transformative potential of prevention. When thinking about culture, we can draw from other closely related industries and the journey that brought them to where they are today.

In 1973, the America Burning report exposed the state of fire safety in the United States, sparking national efforts to reduce fire-related fatalities and property losses. The report issued one main strategy.

“Prioritize Prevention over Reaction”

The remarkable transformation over the last 50 years has led to a 50% decrease in civilian fire deaths, while the nation experienced a 60% increase in population. The fire service’s cultural shift was driven by an acknowledgment that many incidents were preventable. Today, the damage prevention industry faces a similar realization. Each excavation incident represents not just a disruption, but a preventable lesson in awareness, communication, or planning.

Embracing a Culture of Prevention

The findings of the report and culture transformation focused on these key areas:

1. Lack of Public Awareness
2. Poor Codes or Regulations
3. Inadequate Training Resources
4. Insufficient Investment into Research and Technology

The impacts of this report have included the advancement of smoke alarm technology, the acceptance and implementation of fire sprinklers, and the features and design of structures protecting vulnerable populations like schools,

assisted living facilities and hospitals. Also notable, training and education has greatly changed for today’s firefighters and includes many more hours of rigorous training to become certified.

Prevention is not the sole responsibility of one group; it requires a coalition. While technology changes can create efficiency, there is a strong need for continue in-person collaboration for a shared mission.

Application to Damage Prevention and Excavation Safety

Public Awareness

Prevention is not the sole responsibility of one group; it requires a coalition. While technology changes can create efficiency, there is a strong need for continue in-person collaboration for a shared mission. Promoting transparency and partnerships will be important to share in a unified message. Our team at MISS DIG 811 processed over 1.3 million tickets last year through technology, yet we have a renewed focus on in-field

relationships for fostering trust and coordination.

Training Resources

Knowledge is best developed by those closest to the work. The development of a national platform for capturing and sharing Incident After Action Reviews (AAR’s) for damages could be beneficial. These reviews, if standardized and widely accessible, can become invaluable tools for training and learning from industry peers. By analyzing past incidents, we can proactively mitigate future risks. The culture to create such a system would need to be focused on improving the future versus assessing current fault. The fire service has a lot of pride and tradition, but they see the sharing of lessons learned as a contribution to saving lives in the future through education. You can find an example of the platform at www.firefighterclosecalls.com.

Leverage Technology and Research

Just as smoke alarms and sprinkler systems revolutionized fire prevention, advanced GIS and mapping technologies, including integration with excavation equipment can lead to a reduction in underground infrastructure damages. Underwriters Laboratories conducts testing through the Fire Safety Institute. Rapid advancements in technology like thermal imaging have been developed with this coordinated approach. By establishing testing, we can identify and test new materials, excavation technologies, and techniques. By learning from the successes of the past and addressing the challenges of today, we can ensure a safer, more resilient future for our team members, the general public, and our underground infrastructure. As the Common Ground Alliance has challenged us, to think of each individual as a change agent to move closer towards 50 in 5. 🍊

Check out this session, **From Crisis to Culture Shift**, at the Global Damage Prevention Summit in Dallas, TX September 16-18, 2025. Learn more at ACTSNowInc.com/globaldps.



Word Leader in 2D and 3D GPR
for utility locating and mapping



Authorized Distributor

ImpulseRadar Authorized Distributor of WISPR UAVs

American Made WISPR UAVs are NDAA compliant and feature Industry leading RESEPI payload technology supporting TELEDYNE, Hesai, Sony, and other leading sensor payloads.



www.americas.impulseradar.com
Email: info@impulseradar.se





As the underground utility space becomes increasingly crowded, bore planning takes on a pivotal role in the safety and efficiency of drilling operations. With the growing congestion of right-of-ways and the trend of utilities moving from aerial to underground placement, the risk of utility strikes during drilling has increased. Proper bore planning is essential to help avoid these incidents.

Find your local Vermeer dealer at vermeer.com/na/dealer-locator.
Visit vermeermidsouth.com/811 to learn more.

JACKSON, MS
601.923.8888

MEMPHIS, TN
901.758.1928

LITTLE ROCK, AR
501.503.5300

SPRINGDALE, AR
479.361.9110

SHREVEPORT, LA
318.678.1575

Equipment shown is for illustrative purposes only and may differ slightly from actual equipment. Please contact your local Vermeer dealer for more information. Vermeer Corporation reserves the right to make changes in product design, specifications, and equipment without notice. Vermeer and the Vermeer logo are trademarks of Vermeer Manufacturing Company in the U.S. and/or other countries. © 2015 Vermeer MidSouth, Inc. All Rights Reserved.