

Louisiana



2023 Issue 3



Excavating



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



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Call before you dig.



from the desk of

Brent Saltzman



Greetings everyone!

Wow, it has been an incredibly hot summer in Louisiana with record highs broken day after day. I cannot begin to tell you how much I respect those of you excavators and contractors who work so hard in these harsh elements. Hats off to you and thank you for making Louisiana better!

It's been an interesting year thus far at Louisiana 811 so I would like to share some of the happenings within our organization.

Surprisingly, our ticket volume has fallen far below expectations. Incoming locate requests from excavators are down (-8.05%) from the same time last year and locate tickets outgoing to our members are down (-7.72%). Those are very unexpected figures but that is not such a bad thing. Further examination indicates Parishes experiencing significant decreases since 2022 are Calcasieu (-24.79%), Terrebonne (-27.11%), Lafourche (-29.33%), Washington (-49.21%) and St. Helena (-52.37%). We suspect the decrease in ticket volume from the latter four Parishes could be attributed to the completion of restoration work after Hurricane Ida.

Another facet contributing to the decrease in ticket volume is the percentage of update tickets. Update tickets, by the way, are existing tickets that have been updated in our system because of various reasons (e.g., on-going work, rain delays, equipment breakdowns, etc.).

Our staff has been working diligently to address and reduce "nuisance" update tickets and the numbers reflect our efforts. In May, 29.15% of our overall ticket volume was attributed to updated tickets. But in June, the percentage dropped to 25.83%! It deserves mention that anyone who has updated a ticket has surely seen our automated response outlining reasons why the update could potentially be a violation of the Dig Law. Please refrain from updating a ticket if this applies to you:

- Do not update the entire ticket if a portion of the work as outlined on the original ticket has been completed. A new locate request should be submitted for the portion of the work not done.
- Do not update a ticket if the work will not be started within 120 hours (5 days) past the mark-by time.
- Do not update a ticket for the sole purpose of having a valid ticket for inspection purposes.

Refraining from "abusing the system" with these types of tickets will only lead to a positive outcome for everyone. Overwhelmed locators can focus on active worksites whereby work is actually taking place. I can assure you that on-time performance in meeting mark-by times will get better as well. We realize some ticket updates are legitimate but oftentimes we have found they are not.

We do have an update on legislation. HB 292 has become Act 344 and signed into law effective August 1, 2023. This piece of legislation specifically addresses the need to pothole to determine the actual location of certain types of underground utilities or facilities if an excavation or demolition could result in damage. It also clarifies that excavation or demolition activities shall commence not more than 120 hours (5 days) past the mark-by time. Check out this issue for further clarification regarding this latest amendment.

Finally, I am very excited to announce that Louisiana 811 will be the host of a major nationwide event in 2024! It's the Global Excavation Safety Conference that will be held in New Orleans for the first time in its 20-year history next March 19-21! Check out our home page (www.la811.com) for further information but you do not want to miss this opportunity. This event, of course, will follow our awesome annual LA Damage Prevention Summit that will be held next January 23-25 at LAuberge Casino & Hotel in Baton Rouge. Sign up now for these outstanding opportunities to learn more about damage prevention.

Until next time, keep safe in this heat by staying hydrated!

Brent Saltzman
Executive Director
Louisiana 811

Louisiana 811



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Roger Cox, Publisher

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Contact Louisiana 811 for specifics in their dig law.

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

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Louisiana 811

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New Members since first quarter of 2023

Aldine Oil & Gas, LP
Bison Water & Wastewater LLC
Bull Operating LLC
Conexon Connect LLC
East Carroll Water System South
EMC Water System, Inc.
Extex Operating Co.
FP Balboa LA, LLC dba Formentera Operations LLC
GOM Shelf LLC
Guardian Decommissioning, Inc.
Kinder Morgan Ranger, LLC
LGOT, LP
LOBO
Mallard Operating LLC
Rosefield Operating Company, LLC
Town of Campiti
Town of Mangham
Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana
Vexus Fiber LLC

Sustaining Memberships

Armand Construction, Inc.
Access Construction Management Services Inc.

Operations Report

Operational Numbers through July
Updated Operational Numbers for LA811:

Incoming Locate Requests:

2022 YTD thru Jul – 521,488
2023 YTD thru Jul – 479,484

Outgoing Notifications:

2022 YTD thru Jul – 2,522,516
2023 YTD thru Jul – 2,327,732

Call Ratio (Incoming notifications to Outgoing Members)

2022 YTD thru Jul – 1:4.84
2023 YTD thru Jul – 1:4.85

On-Line Ticket Entry

2022 YTD thru Jul – 88.07%
2023 YTD thru Jul – 89.96%

Traveling with Louisiana 811



Atmos Energy and Hartree Natural Gas in Monroe at Home Depot celebrating 8u Day.



Brad Deshotel, AT&T (r) with USIC in Broussard at the 8u Day event.



8u Day at Stine's in Broussard with CenterPoint Energy and LA8u.



Snow cones were a hit at Bossier City with USIC and CenterPoint Energy celebrating 8u Day.



Another successful PAL meeting!

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The way I See it

By Cole Vanderlick
 Manager - Damage Prevention
 Louisiana 811



The way I see it, so many of you are working diligently to do your job to the best of your ability. Various stakeholders receive our magazine that associate with 811. We have the utmost respect for you and strive to be a helpful resource for you. We are more than just a notification center for underground utilities and facilities; we also think of ourselves as a damage prevention organization. We can help you navigate through the unknown by facilitating communication between the right stakeholders to get the job done safely and timely. We must trust each other and be there for each other. Complying with Louisiana dig laws is a smart way to make matters much simpler for everyone involved.

The last issue, I wrote about utilizing CGAs (Common Ground Alliance)

data to help prevent damages in Louisiana. Check out the pdf version on our website under Resource Center for details. We have been educating on key reasons for damages during stakeholder meetings to help prevent future occurrences. The Louisiana Dig Law Advisory Committee has also been working thoroughly to get us working safely together. That group has been meeting for many months and a new dig law amendment has recently come into effect.

House Bill 292 has been approved and signed by the Governor now becoming Act No. 344. This amendment to the "Dig Law" went into effect on August 1, 2023.

To summarize, this amendment states/clarifies the following:

- Reemphasizes that the marking of an operator's facility or utility shall be provided for excavation or demolition purposes only.
- Clarifies the requirement that excavation or demolition activities shall begin not more than 120 hours (5 days) past the mark-by-time.
- Stresses the requirement for excavators/demolishers to use white paint, flags, or stakes to mark the proposed route or area of excavation/demolition for tickets called in to the center. This is not required when entering a locate request online. (Considered "virtual white lining").
- Requires potholing to determine the actual location of such facilities or utilities if an excavation or demolition operation could result in damage to underground utilities or facilities handling electricity, gas, natural gas, oil, petroleum products, or other flammable, toxic, or corrosive fluids or gases. For forestry excavation operations that could result in damage to underground utilities or facilities handling electricity, gas, natural gas, oil, petroleum products, or other flammable, toxic, or corrosive fluids or gases, the forestry excavator and the utility or facility owner or operator shall cooperate to determine the actual location of such facilities or utilities.


A copy of this Act can be viewed at louisiana811.com.

These dig law amendments, if abided by the excavator, should help prevent

damages and keep the 811 system operating more efficiently. 28% of our nation's underground utility damages come from failing to pothole or maintain clearance. That's the highest percentage of reasons for our nation's utility damages. Now that potholing is a Louisiana law, we should see damages decrease if this law is complied with.

Many pipeline operators have concerns and questions about forestry and logging excavation/demolition requirements. The above amendment should clarify forestry and logging requirements. We highly encourage loggers to effectively communicate and cooperate with local utility and pipeline operators. For any questions or complaints, reach out to the Department of Natural Resources at pipelineinspectors@la.gov or 833-726-0410 to discuss with the enforcement agency. Be on the lookout for the next magazine issue to address some logging concerns in an article by one of our member pipeline operators.

We are starting to prepare for our upcoming Louisiana Damage Prevention Summit! This is one of the best conferences our industry provides to our local stakeholders. We are excited to discuss important issues to get us working better together in LA. We want to hear your concerns throughout the state. If you have agenda ideas that can enhance damage prevention in Louisiana, please reach out to me to get involved with our Damage Prevention Summit planning committee. Registration for the conference is now open at www.louisiana.damagepreventionsummit.com. You'll see more information in our next magazine issue, but save the date for January 23-25, 2024 at L'Auberge Casino & Hotel in Baton Rouge.

The way I see it is we are here to help facilitate our industry stakeholders. When something is not working efficiently, we are all ears to try to improve for the betterment of all. We want to know what is working and not working for you out in the field. We can always strive to improve. It all comes back to communication being our industry's most vital tool for success. When our industry stakeholders communicate on their projects, the risk of damages drops significantly. 


Board Member Spotlight



Brad Deshotel



I have 24 years of experience working for AT&T, with my current position being Area Manager – Damage Prevention. I have responsibility for damage prevention in 14 states throughout the Southeast and Midwest regions. I earned my Six Sigma Black Belt certification in 2010 while working for AT&T as a process improvement Area Manager. This has helped me make data driven decisions in my current position with AT&T and while serving on the 811 board. With an unwavering commitment to safety and a deep understanding of excavation safety and protocols, I proudly serve as Chair of the Board and Chief Executive Officer for Louisiana 811 as well as the Board of Directors for Georgia 811.

Under the current Louisiana 811 Executive Director and staff, our damage prevention efforts have reached new heights, contributing to safer communities and a more resilient infrastructure. I look forward to working with LA811 and the board of directors to continue our efforts of reducing damages and improving the 811 process in Louisiana. 

Start the New Year with CenterPoint Energy

CenterPoint Energy training is focused on making sure your leadership and field personnel understand the 811 state laws, safe digging best practices, and other tips to help your projects be completed damage free without the delays and expenses of cutting a natural gas line. Most importantly, it is critical we cover how to stay safe in the event of a cut natural gas line.

Our training also covers the steps to prevent natural gas ignition, explosion, and inherent risks should blowing gas from a damaged pipeline occur in your community.



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





Sustaining Member Spotlight



Alliance Safety Council is a member-driven association providing online, virtual and in-person safety training, as well as technology and records management solutions. Its records management and productivity tools help to eliminate the uncertainties of record keeping, compliance, job history and training.

A signature system of Alliance is PowerSafe, which provides standardized, OSHA awareness-level safety courses for the utility industry. With PowerSafe, workers receive the same information in the same way before arriving to work. Training records are housed in a secure database and easily validated through an auditable system, ending the unnecessary duplication of training.

Other highly acclaimed Alliance programs include Certified Occupational Safety Specialist® (COSS), Certificate for Occupational Safety Managers (COSM), and SAF Basic (an online alternative to the Basic Orientation Plus). For over 20 years, COSS has helped workers master the core competencies necessary to be successful in the occupational safety and health field. COSS is ideal for those new to safety or someone looking for a refresher. The only prerequisite for COSS is a high school diploma. The COSM program provides specialized training for those with a minimum of 2 years of safety, health or environmental work experience.

SAF Basic – one of Alliance’s newest offerings – allows workers to access interactive, awareness-level safety training anytime, anywhere. Remote identity verification and participation monitoring technology helps ensure the integrity of training.

For more information, visit www.alliancesafetycouncil.org.



Zenner vigorously supports groups like Louisiana 811 as they provide a valuable community service that prevents accidents that cause harm or property damage. We are proud to be a contributing sponsor to this organization.

The Zenner/Minol group is a global company focused on meter production, meter reading and sub-metering products and services. Zenner/Minol serves customers in 100 countries and manufactures and assembles its products in manufacturing plants on 5 continents; our plant in Banning, California allows for our products to be produced in the United States. Zenner is the largest water and gas meter manufacturer in the world leading the way with world class engineering and support.

Zenner being the largest Water and Gas meter producer in the world with offices and affiliates in 100 countries and manufacturing plants on 5 continents manufactures its products to ISO9001, ISO14001 and ISO18001 certification standards. Established in 1903 with 5200 employees globally and focused on water and gas industry innovation only.

For more information about Zenner products and services www.zennerusa.com or email: marketing@zennerusa.com



As North America’s leader in underground utility damage prevention, USIC protects critical infrastructure and communities across 48 states and in Canada. Our more than 11,000 technicians receive extensive and ongoing training and are equipped with the latest, state-of-the-art technologies to deliver the highest quality, safest, and most accurate locating services, and the size and scope of our operations enable us to provide a significant cost advantage for our customers.

An emerging leader in utility services and solutions, USIC includes affiliate companies Blood Hound, RECONN, and On Target, which provide a range of specialized services for the installation, maintenance, protection, and restoration of utility infrastructure and services.



United Rentals, Inc. is the largest equipment rental company in the world. The company has an integrated network of 1,186 rental locations in North America and 11 in Europe. In North America, the company operates in 49 states and every Canadian province. The company's approximately 18,500 employees serve construction and industrial customers, utilities, municipalities, homeowners and others. With 40 locations in Louisiana, the company has General

Rental, Power & HVAC, Fluid Solutions, Trench Safety, Site Services, Tool Solutions and now Mobile Storage.

We value LA811 as it is a representation of our main core value: Safety First. This not only holds true for our employees, but also our customers, and we are here to make sure we are doing our part to keep our entire community safe.

For more information, rdeloach@ur.com or UnitedRentals.com



Established by Russell Armand in June 1993, Armand Construction Inc. is a utility contractor specializing in natural gas distribution systems. Our core services include installation, repair, and maintenance; all carried out with a strong emphasis on safety. We

are a family-oriented business operating out of Broussard, Louisiana. Armand Construction prioritizes the well-being of our employees, the public, and the underground facilities in our region. With practical experience and a skilled workforce, we take pride in the product we offer. Our partnership with Louisiana One Call paves the way for our goals to be achieved. With LA One Call's assistance, our approach to excavation can be carried out with confidence all while protecting the well-being of the community and safeguarding critical Infrastructure. With each passing year, Armand Construction strives to do better than the year before regarding damage prevention and safety. We try to stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing world, with the understanding that in order to remain successful we have to evolve. The lines of communication that are open with LA One Call's assistance are vital to our operation and we look forward to many years of partnership to come.



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-ENERGY** (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
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Excavation.. The Primary Reason We Are Here!

*By Roger Cox
President
ACTS Now, Inc.*

What I've learned is we're all just people, folks trying to figure out how to get the job done.

If ever you were able to find the epicenter of this damage prevention industry, you would likely find yourself in the midst of an excavation site. Roads, bridges, setting poles, plowing, trenching, boring, grading... To really get a feeling for the scope of excavation, just go to most any 811 website and read the definition of excavation.

Here's an example: *"Excavate or excavation" means any operation in which earth, rock or other material or mass of material on or below the ground is moved or otherwise displaced by any means, except... "for some political exceptions." The term "excavate" shall include, but not be limited to, the operations of demolition, blasting, grading, land leveling, trenching, digging, ditching, drilling, augering, tunneling, scraping, cable or pipe plowing, driving, jacking, wrecking, razing, rending, moving or removing any structure or other material or mass of material on or below the ground.*

Utilities only exist because of excavation. The locating industry exists because of excavation. We wouldn't even need 811 centers without excavation. Federal and state regulations and laws were, for the most part, passed to regulate damages to underground infrastructure caused by excavation.

I think I see a pattern here. It should be obvious to us all that the excavator is a critical stakeholder in the damage prevention process. An excavator friend once told me, "If you see an excavator digging at some specific location, you can bet that he wasn't just driving down the road and randomly decided that this was a good spot to dig a hole. You can bet that somebody needed something, and he was sent there to fix the problem."

But many times that creates another problem.


Another excavator friend told me the difference between a good excavator and a bad excavator is the good excavator understands his impact on the circle of damage prevention. As defined by my friend who by profession chose to be an excavator, the person who understands his impact will always call before he digs. He will wait until the area is located so that all affected utilities are accounted for and then he'll go about his job in a professional and safe manner.

Excavation can and often does take place without damage to underground utilities. The truth is that most of the time that is exactly what takes place. What we most often hear about are the times that failures in the process occur. And when that happens, statistics

show that the majority of the time the failure is not the excavator. But like the locator, since the excavator is an easy target because both of these stakeholder groups have either touched the site or were supposed to be there. As a result, it is way too easy to point the finger at the excavator or the locator, depending on which side of the fence you stand.


What I've learned is we're all just people, folks trying to figure out how to get the job done. And the ones who get it done with the least disruption are the ones who've learned their impact on the circle and care about it. One of the secrets about successful projects is not a secret at all. The conversation always seems to revolve around the concept of finding ways to work together. In fact, the beginning of many projects were rough but got increasingly smoother when cards were exchanged, when phone calls were answered and when respect was shown. I think in the old days they called that "working together."

I think this falls under the category of "the way to achieve your success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first."

Thanks to all of you who get it... and who continue to make it happen! Dig safe... 

2023 Scholarship Recipients

We are thrilled to unveil the recipients of the 2023 Louisiana 811 Scholarship! We received an incredible 50+ applications from graduating high school seniors pursuing higher education this fall.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to all the applicants for their time and effort. Our review committee was truly inspired by the essays students wrote on how they would spread the word about the importance of 811 to their peers and families. These exceptional individuals have shown unwavering dedication to their academic pursuits and a true passion for promoting safe digging practices. Congratulations once again to all the scholarship winners! We believe you will make a remarkable impact as you continue your educational journey. Best of luck in all your future endeavors! 



Cadence Bell

Grant High School; Academic Scholarship for Louisiana Tech University



Lauren Dixon

Mandeville High School; Academic Scholarship for University of South Alabama



Garrett DuBois

Grant High School; Trade School Scholarship for Central Louisiana Technical Collage



Layton Parks

Magnolia Bend Academy; Trade School Scholarship for Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College



Vonghachack Damian Liamkeo

Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts; Academic Scholarship for Tulane University

Insurance - The Current **DIRTY** Word

By Virginia Reames
The Policy Center
Jackson, Mississippi

“It went up HOW much?”

No one has avoided sticker shock when they got this year's insurance renewal no one. And don't even mention Homeowners or any other property coverage! Unless you live 500 miles from the coast, on top of a mountain that doesn't have any trees, you're probably wondering if there is a nice side job you can grab so you can afford to pay the bill!

To begin with, we haven't kept our property values up to meet increased prices, not only to sell the property – but to repair or replace it in case of a large loss. Yeah, we know values in our neighborhoods have gone way up – and we sure like knowing that. But did we increase the coverage on our homes to match? Bet not. I bet it never crossed your mind.

How about that office building? Have sales prices gone up in that neighborhood, too? They probably have, since they have gone up country-wide – some higher than others. But they have all gone up. That's the good news.

Now here's the bad news:

Suppose for a minute something really bad happened – fire, tornado – something really bad. There's something called “co-insurance” in the body language of your policy. You know, all those pages that go on and on and are just so boring that you haven't bothered to read them. It has its own paragraph, but the point is not whether you ever read them – but what “co-insurance” means.

It means that, unless you have insurance coverage of at least 80% of the Replacement Cost of your building, the check you will receive for that bad damage will be reduced by the percentage you are out of co-insurance. And that bites, my friend...hard!

In the last 5 years, both materials and labor costs have escalated so dramatically that I would venture to say

that those little “cost of living” increases you have on your property policies – likely in the range of 2-4% - won't touch the increase in the labor and materials.

To the insurance company, it isn't about the sales value of the property, it's about what they are on the hook for if the thing got leveled/totaled – fire, tornado, whichever. And whether there is enough insurance to pay for the rebuilding of it – along with the replacement of the contents. That's the problem on your end to fix. If there isn't enough insurance, you're the one that's not going to get paid enough to replace what was lost.


Now the problem on the insurance company's end is whether or not they can pay claims and expenses, and still make a small profit. If they can't, rates go up. If your state has had some devastating weather hits – wind, hail, hurricanes, wildfires, you might have noticed a few insurance companies withdrawing from your state. It's happened in several states – Florida, Louisiana, California to name just a few. Hard weather hits, coupled with the low rates we have had over the last few years, made worse by not having adequate coverage to match the rising costs of goods & services just makes a Perfect Storm.

The past several years have been something called a “soft” market. This means there is fierce competition for the premium dollar, and companies either don't raise rates, or actually reduce them to attract customers. Add all that together, toss in supply chain issues raising costs of materials, (bought

any eggs lately? Oh wait – that's coming down ...) and while the timing could be better, you are going to see it on your renewal bills! No way around it.

But – if you have to pay high rates – make sure you get back enough if you have a large loss – and the way to do that is to make sure the coverage amount is enough to rebuild your home/building like it currently is. Don't worry about changes in building codes – there is coverage built-in to adjust for that. (Look for “Law or Ordinance” in the extensions!) If you can't find it, be sure and ask your agent. Because you definitely want it. Almost all Homeowner or building coverage will have it. It's “built-in”, and there is no extra charge. Also, make sure you have Replacement Cost coverage – never mind “ACV” (that means “depreciated”).

One last note to make sure you have the correct coverage on your Homeowners' policy is guns, art, jewelry, electronics. Most policies come with “sub limits” – meaning they will only pay a certain amount (usually \$1,000 tops) on those items, regardless of the cost or value. If you have expensive items in that category, tell your agent. He will write something called a “Floater” to attach to your Homeowners' and yes, you'll probably have to have the items appraised, but do it. You spent good money on what you have acquired, and you want to have it fully protected.

Don't think “it won't happen” – it happens every day. Ask the folks in Rolling Fork, Mississippi – or what used to be Rolling Fork...yes, it happens. 



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Safe on Land or Water?

By Ed Landgraf
Texas811

How many of you think of yourselves as an underwater excavator? Ask yourself - Does ANY of your work touch water or a waterway? The biggest challenge is making sure ALL types of excavation either on land or in the water is done safely. A “waterway” is any water: stream, creek, river, lake, ocean, marsh. Landlocked states should be just as engaged because if there are utilities below, a ticket should be created, and proper considerations need to be taken. Preventing loss of life, injury and environmental pollution, and destruction of assets is the mandate and focus of the “Pipeline Task Force” whose efforts can be applied to any utility. This national task force is co-chaired by Ed Landgraf, Texas811’s Director of Marine Operations and Safety and Devon Carlock, President of the Dredging Safety Council and meets quarterly.

The Pipeline Task Force working group consisted of over 50 diverse participants representing the dredge, marine construction, 811, pipeline, PHMSA, NTSB, and US Coast Guard sectors. The recent agendas have been to enhance Best Practices and training as recommended by the National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) findings from the August 21, 2020, Corpus Christi incident. The accident killed five crewmen after a cutter suction dredge struck a propane pipeline in the Inner Harbor. The gas

ignited, causing an explosion aboard the dredge. NTSB investigators released their findings outlining events leading up to the Port of Corpus Christi dredge explosion. The NTSB report finds the incident was caused by a series of events that began when the dredge vessel hit an underwater propane pipeline and ended in the deaths of five of its crew and others injured after the dredge originally caught fire. The report continues to give an account of the fire reigniting later that night, precipitating the dredge sinking overnight. The task force evaluated the NTSB findings,



Weeks Clamshell at Tappan Zee Bridge, NY

recommendations, current dredge, and pipeline company positions and captured feedback from the Pipeline Task Force stakeholders resulting in over 40 proactive suggestions. A consensus was reached to expand on key topics to enhance safety and reduce risks. The goal of the Pipeline Task


Force is to expand each of the topics and spur action through enhanced best practices, education, and training with the hope of being recognized as consistent national practices across the Dredge, Marine Construction, Pipeline, Regulatory, 811, and Agency stakeholder groups.

The task force meetings formed breakout teams to dive deeper into the 5 key topic areas identified:

- Enhanced Training and Education
- Modify Marine Tolerance Zones
- Mapping, Survey and Marking
- One Call, Damage Prevention for Underwater Excavation
- Project Communications, Design and Planning

The goal is to expand each of these 5 areas to spur action through enhanced best practices, education, and training with the hope of being recognized as consistent national practices across the industry.

Sneak Peak – soon you will hear of a new program called MarineSafe811 this is under development for release in Q3 2023. It’s a one-stop shop “Center of Excellence” for underwater safety and damage prevention.

For more information on marine excavation and safety contact Ed Landgraf at ed@texas811.org 



Members of the Pipeline Task Force



Always great to see everyone at the LRWA event!



Atmos Energy showing up to celebrate 8u Day in Prairieville.



Marathon Pipeline supporting 8u Day in Prairieville.



8u Day in Prairieville was a success!



Atmos Energy and DNR in Monroe celebrating 8u Day.



Lots of great conversations at 8u Day in Prairieville.



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

“50 in 5”: Damage Reduction Calls for Bold Industry Action

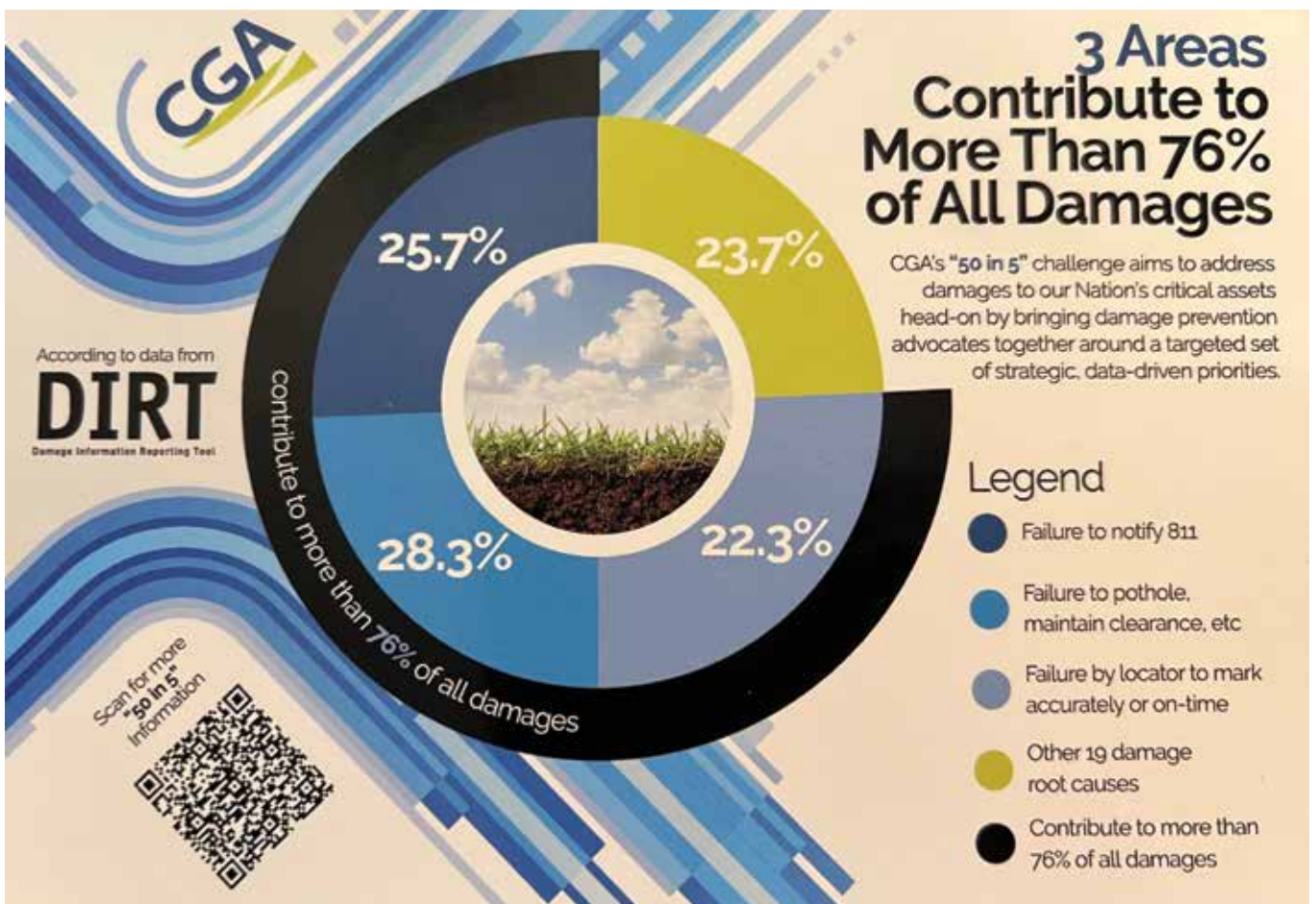
According to CGA's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, the annual rate of damages to buried infrastructure in the U.S. has remained stagnant for most of the last decade, and costs the U.S. a staggering \$30 billion every year. Each of the hundreds of thousands of dig-ins to underground utilities that occur annually has the potential to cripple communities and businesses by cutting them off from critical services, causing serious injury or even loss of life. Construction spending has increased steadily over time, and new investments into the country's infrastructure suggest that this damage trend will continue unless the industry addresses the persistent challenges contributing to underground damages.

Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the national nonprofit trade association dedicated to protecting underground utility lines, people who dig near them and their communities, issued its “50 in 5” industry challenge in early 2023 with a goal of reducing damages to critical underground utilities by 50% in five years. The “50 in 5” challenge aims to address damages to our Nation's critical assets head-on by bringing damage prevention advocates together around a targeted set of strategic, data-driven priorities.

CGA's industry challenge encourages the damage prevention industry to concentrate on three focus areas that prioritize critical issues identified by CGA's Next Practices Initiative and the top damage root causes that contribute

to more than 76% of damages to buried infrastructure, according to CGA's most recent DIRT Report:

- 1. Effective and consistent use of 811:** DIRT data and market research indicates that, while 811 awareness is very high, particularly among professional excavators, 60% of damages to underground utilities are caused specifically by professionals not contacting 811 prior to excavation. The issue is not awareness among professional excavators, but rather the lack of consistent and effective use of the 811 system that contributes to these damages. To help implement behavior change by these professionals, CGA unveiled a refreshed 811 tagline, “Safety is in your hands. Every dig. Every time,”



along with excavator-focused outreach tools to encourage excavators to take an active role in their jobsite safety through consistent use of 811. CGA's Summer Summit, set to take place in Gulf Shores, Ala., from July 31-Aug. 3, will focus on the failure to notify root cause.

2. Key excavator practices (potholing, maintaining clearance, etc.):

Potholing—or test holing—to confirm the location of buried utilities, and then maintaining the required clearance around those utilities, are key steps for protecting the integrity of underground infrastructure. These two excavation processes have long been CGA Best Practices (5.19 and 5.20), but continue to be common causes of damages to buried utilities. Implementing potholing and maintaining proper clearance on the jobsite could dramatically reduce damages to buried infrastructure. CGA's Next Practices Initiative highlights one way that damage reductions were achieved by operators who contractually compensate excavators for potholing.

3. Accurate, timely utility locating: CGA's Locator White Paper and the work of the Next Practices Initiative


reveal that improving the accuracy of facility maps and implementing electronic white-lining would help locators complete their work more quickly and accurately. Efforts like a Minnesota pilot program to make 811 ticket-level facility visualizations available to locators and other

The “50 in 5” challenge aims to address damages to our Nation’s critical assets head-on...

system end users have the potential to increase locating efficiency, among other systemic benefits. Decreasing over-notification practices utilized by both contractors and facility owner/operators themselves would also help decrease overall 811 ticket request

volume so locators' workloads are more manageable.

With damage rates remaining static year-over-year, and increasing infrastructure investments foreshadowing even greater construction activity to come, the damage prevention industry is at an important inflection point. We must take strong steps now toward reducing damages by addressing the key areas of inefficiency that are contributing to damages. CGA's “50 in 5” challenge is a response to this need for definitive action to drive damages down in a significant way. Every stakeholder involved in the damage prevention process should commit their organizations to contributing to CGA's “50 in 5” challenge, making bold decisions and investments that will help cut damages to vital underground infrastructure in half.

For more information about CGA and annual damages to buried infrastructure, including how your organization can become more involved in damage prevention, visit www.commongroundalliance.com and dirt.commongroundalliance.com. 



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Membership Contact Information Process Simplified



Underground facility operators in Louisiana are required to belong to Louisiana 811, where we maintain the maps and records that allow us to notify them of nearby excavations so that the area can be marked for safety. According to our bylaws, as a condition of membership, all members must review, provide, and update, **ANNUALLY**, all the contact information for the following:

1. **The senior management contact for your company;**
2. **The contact person for notifications;**
3. **The contact person for billing;**
4. **The contact information for the person designated to provide your mapping information and keep it updated.**
5. **The member will provide a 24/7 telephone number for emergency notifications as required by Louisiana Law.**

Our e-Notify system makes it easier and more convenient for our members to keep their contact information accurate and up-to-date. It is a free service that provides the Senior Management Contact Person secure, on-line access to their member information for fast, easy updates. Members who haven't tried it are encouraged to register and give it a test-drive.

If you would like more information on eNotify, please contact Toni Mancuso at 225-275-3700, extension 429 or by e-mail at enotify@laonecall.com.

If you need assistance with mapping updates, please contact Shana Fleming at 225-275-3700, extension 443 or by e-mail at sfleming@occinc.com. 

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Line in the Sand

By Joe Igel

An old Tom Hanks movie, Joe versus the Volcano, always brings a smile. To simplify without spoilers, it is about a worried hypochondriac that always sees the negative side of life. At the end of the movie, just when you think he has changed, he reverts to his old behavior. Meg Ryan asks him “It is always going to be something with you, isn’t it, Joe?”

Through my years of working on legislation for excavation around underground utilities, no matter how much we achieved, I always sought more, and I think some people I worked with thought “It is always going to be something with you, isn’t it, Joe?”

During these years in and affiliated with the excavation industry, there has been a lot of change, some missteps, but some significant improvements. That is not to say that there is no continued room for improvement. There are additional issues that are becoming problematic.

Construction sites have become large, complex, and demanding. These characteristics have introduced new complications.

Temporary Installments

When I started in the industry, there were temporary utilities, which meant temporary electricity which was not much more than 120-volt power for the carpenters. An extension cord or a cable was laid across the surface with the hope that it was not snagged or cut.

Today, temporary utilities have grown into much more complicated, more substantive, and more vital lifelines. Tower cranes demand more and interruption of that causes significant downtime and delay. Neighboring businesses may need temporary communication or powerlines during construction. An interruption of any of these temporary utilities can bring production or business to a massive halt. Yet rarely are markings or indicators present. Restoration of service is not simply finding or buying another power cord. More importantly, they can be as harmful or as deadly as permanent installations.


Yet, these utilities, unlike their permanent counterparts, are rarely on the drawings, often unmarked and are installed in less than precise manners. Vacuum excavation is a great tool for locating utilities when there is some predictability of the location of the utilities. Vacuum excavating every square inch of ground is not workable. If these lines were protected, marked, noted on the drawings, and committed to a clear and specific corridor on a job site, damage to them could be minimized. And workers could proceed with more confidence that they are safe.

Newly Installed or Moved Utilities

In anticipation of a new project or one that might create conflicts for existing utilities, existing utilities are often

relocated. Yet determining their new location often seems impossible. The delay in obtaining the new locations is often only possible after the project is complete or at least out of the ground with little or no excavation remaining. Until the final “as-builts” are submitted and entered the damage prevention phase, there will be no markings, no location. So how are they avoided?

What is the solution?

In neither of these cases does the law really provide a solution. It simply comes down to the same principles we relied upon years ago, Communication, Cooperation and Collaboration. All parties (the contractors relying upon the utility feeds, the general contractors/construction managers, and excavators) need to effectively work together on an ongoing basis to make work near these successful and safe. These strategies have worked in the past and continue to work now. It is time to dust them off and rely upon them in these situations. 

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



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

By John Jacobi

Who Do YOU TRUST?

Do you trust everyone the same way? Probably not. For example, would you trust a three-year-old the same way you would trust a mature adult? Do you believe everything you read in the newspaper? Do you believe everything you find on the internet? What about TV news?

My guess is that you have a LOT more problems with trust these days than you had when you were in high school. I know I sure have a lot of problems with believing anything I am told. Everything goes through my own personal truth detector filters, and I decide who to believe, what to believe and when.

Call me a skeptic, but I do not believe in Santa Claus. I do not believe there is a fountain of youth. I do not believe there is a way to restore my once plentiful and dark hair.

Based on the number of spam emails I get every single day, I am cynical. There are people out there that ARE out to “get” me any way they can.


That brings me to something called “situational ethics.” Joseph Fletcher (1905-1991) developed a model asserting that decision-making should be based upon the circumstances of a particular situation, and not upon fixed law. His premise was that “As long as Love is your intention, the end justifies the means. Justice is not in the letter of the Law, it is in the distribution of Love.” My problem with that philosophy is that I do not believe in free love. Love almost always has a price. An act of love to one person may be an act of hate to another. Can you say “war”?

As an engineer, I studied physics. Last time I checked, physics is a science. Newton’s third law can be stated simply: For every

action, there is an equal, but opposite, reaction. Newton’s third appears to apply in today’s society. One political party does something, and another political party reacts in the opposite direction. That is what is called a “zero-sum” equation. One party cannot “win” unless the other party “loses.” Unfortunately, everyone loses because so much energy is invested in posturing. There has to be a better way. The problem with situational ethics (“The end justifies the means.”) is that unintended consequences all too often outweigh the so-called benefits.

True science (including physics) is objective and unlike Justice, the laws of physics and the laws of science apply equally to EVERYONE!! If you don’t do something you should (like call before you dig) or if you do something you should not (like not waiting for underground utilities to be marked in a non-emergency situation or simply ignoring the marks), sooner or later Mother Nature or Murphy’s Law will make you pay!

Call before you dig. Use the appropriate PPE. If something does not seem right, STOP and figure it out before something bad happens. Be safe out there!!

Update: In a previous column, I mentioned that by law dated December 23, 2022, PHMSA was required by Congress to issue a final rule on automatic and remote-controlled shut-off valves no later than April 22, 2023, or get docked \$5,000 per day. May 18, 2023, PHMSA posted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (88 FR 31890). June 30, 2023, PHMSA extended the Public Comment Period to August 16, 2023 (88 FR 42284). As a practical matter, it will most likely be at least 2024 before the rule goes final. That is only \$1.8 million per year out of the current \$29 million budget. It’s only money. 

*John Jacobi retired from PHMSA.
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