

2024 Issue 2

# Louisiana



**CGA's 50-in-5  
Challenge: Moving  
the Industry Forward**

page 10



# **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.



**The Challenges of Repairing Rural**

# Louisiana



from the desk of

## Brent Saltzman



It seems the norm now here at Louisiana 811 that we have new developments and more changes taking place. Each change is for the betterment of our program and that is what we continue to strive to do.

One of the latest developments is that we are supporting a bill (HB 397) in the legislature that will benefit not only utility/facility owners and operators but excavators as well. This bill outlines a Large Project Excavation & Demolition and defines marine excavation activity. Furthermore, it extends the life of marine excavation tickets to 30 days to align with the existing ticket life for agriculture and forestry work.

This bill was the result of a lot of hard work by the Dig Law Advisory Committee and the LA 811 Board of Directors. We have been discussing the need to address large projects for years and, as of this writing, the bill has passed the House of Representatives and the Senate Commerce Committee. If passed by the full Senate and signed by Governor Landry, it will become effective January 1, 2025. If the bill passes, we will include it in the next issue.

We are extremely excited to announce that we have hired another team member to assist with our damage prevention efforts! This person is bilingual and possesses many strong qualities to help support our mission of protecting our member's assets, the public and the environment. More details about our new hire will be available soon so follow us on social media to learn more.

Another exciting addition you can check out is our new Dashboard tool which can be viewed on our website homepage at [louisiana811.com](http://louisiana811.com). This tool will give you the ability to see real-time data of total tickets for the State of Louisiana and allow users to query data by Parish, ticket type and date ranges amongst other things. We are anxious for users to look at this tool, try it out, and provide your feedback. We feel it will be helpful in discovering where the tickets are coming from and what type of tickets are being submitted.

Finally, we successfully hosted the Global Excavation Safety Conference in New Orleans where attendees learned useful information about our industry. This conference, along with the Common Ground Alliance Conference we recently attended, has extremely valuable functions to educate attendees and aid in damage prevention efforts. We highly encourage our stakeholders to attend such events as well as our annual Damage Prevention Summit to learn how to increase your knowledge base to help reduce damages.

Until next time, God bless you, and stay safe!

Brent Saltzman  
Executive Director  
Louisiana 811

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Louisiana 811 is published quarterly.

Roger Cox, Publisher

Individual subscriptions are available without charge in the United States.

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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**

Black Jack Operating, LLC  
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Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority  
Lucky Lad Energy, LLC

### **New Sustaining Members of LA811:**

Blew & Associates, P. A.  
CLM Equipment Co.  
Louisiana Pipeliners Association  
RAMCO, LLC  
Staking University

### **Operations Numbers**

#### *Incoming Locate Requests:*

2023 – 205,014  
2024 – 175,276 (14.51% decrease)

#### *Outgoing Notifications:*

2023 – 992,522  
2024 – 852,309 (14.13% decrease)

#### *Call Ratio (Incoming notifications to Outgoing Members)*

2023 – 1:4.84  
2024 – 1:4.86

#### *On-Line Ticket Entry*

2023– 89.95%  
2024– 89.89%

Our intention is  
**DAMAGE PREVENTION.**

Click before you dig.



# Membership Contact Information Process Simplified



**U**nderground 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](mailto: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](mailto:sfleming@occinc.com).



## 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.<sup>SM</sup>

A message from Entergy New Orleans, LLC and Entergy Louisiana, LLC  
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# The way I See it

Louisiana 811

By Cole Vanderlick  
Manager - Damage Prevention  
Louisiana 811



Happy Summer to our beloved industry family! We hope you have stayed safe, found success, and built relationships while we are moving along through this year. We have just come out of April National Safe Digging Month with great engagement through our social media contest and Jazz Fest banner flyover, as well as participating with Atmos Energy at their community events! We're excited to bring back locally what we've learned nationally at the Global Excavation Safety Conference in New Orleans in March and at the CGA Conference in April. Our industry celebrated Diggers Night Out programs in Lafayette during April and New Orleans during May. These are some of the best events this industry has to offer to celebrate the amazing construction work of our excavators. More Diggers Night Out events to come in Northshore, Baton Rouge, and Lake Charles later this year!

Congratulations to the 2024 recipients of the Louisiana 811 Scholarship! We received 54 applications this year, and these five outstanding students stood out to be our winners: Noah Barber (Pine High School), Ella Meche (Rayne High School), Andrew Payne (Silliman Institute), Jaylie Smith (Stanley High School), and Blake Waguespack (Archbishop Rummel High School). We are proud of these students' hard work and appreciate all of our applicants. Stay tuned for some photos in our next magazine issue.

We are excited to host Staking University's Locator Certification Seminar (LCS) at our office in Baton

Rouge! This two-day class will be Monday June 24th @ 8:30 – Tuesday June 25th @ 4:30 at Louisiana 811, 2215 W. Boardwalk Dr, Baton Rouge, LA 70816. The cost is \$795 per person. Staking University's LCS is designed to aid utility locators in developing superior troubleshooting techniques, skills to consistently provide accurate and complete utility location information, a mastery of locating equipment, and skills required to pass Staking U's locator certification test. The Locator Certification Seminar includes classroom learning and outdoor presentations. An opportunity to take Staking U's written certification test is available at the end of class. Visit the link for more info and to register! <https://www.stakinguniversity.com/class/2-day-lcs-batonrouge/>

Louisiana 811 invites you to an upcoming safety meeting coming soon to a city near you! Visit [https://la.pipeline-awareness.com/meeting\\_schedule](https://la.pipeline-awareness.com/meeting_schedule) now to register for a meeting occurring between the end of July through September. Paradigm's PAL (Pipeline Association of Louisiana) meetings are free to attend, include a good meal, door prizes, and you will hear a brief presentation from Louisiana 811 on dig laws and best practices. Why wouldn't you want to attend? It's an excellent forum to grow your relationships with local gas pipeline operators and obtain contact information to communicate and work together in times of need.

We're looking forward to seeing you soon! Don't hesitate to reach out in the meantime with any questions or issues. 811




# Board Member Spotlight

Kevin Bono




**M**y construction supervisory role at Cleco Power, LLC, allows me to erect new business electrical systems, perform routine maintenance of the electrical grid, and maintain the reliability of overhead and underground electrical grids. While performing damage investigations for the past 20 years at Cleco, I am proactively passing my knowledge to new Cleco employees, hired contractors, and the public. My initiatives as a supervisor and 811 Board Member are to “Protect, Promote and Engage.”

- Step one: Protect employees, and the public with a questioning attitude to mitigate hazards, utility damage, and owner/operator’s asset expenses.
- Step two: Promote training, innovative ideas, and positive attitudes toward damage prevention.
- Step three: Engage with employees and the public to heighten awareness of unknown hazards associated with underground utilities.

Through this initiative and partnership with Louisiana 811, Cleco has seen a decline in damage claims due to Louisiana 811 promotions, billboards, alliance councils, and nationwide summits. Let’s utilize the Louisiana 811 website for training videos, current Dig Laws, scholarships, and 811 excavator training and education. I challenge all operators and facility owners to “Dig to Success.” 

## 811 Board Member James Martarona Retiring



**C**ongratulations to James Martarona, who is retiring from Louisiana 811’s Board of Directors. We sincerely appreciate the time and energy that James spent on the board, especially for his amazing service as Chairman of the Board. Thank you, James! 

# 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](mailto:PublicAwareness@CenterPointEnergy.com)



# Traveling with *Louisiana* 811



*Brent Saltzman on WBRZ promoting April Safe Digging Month*



*Brent Saltzman and Khrysanne Kerr at the CGA Conference*



*(left) Cole Vanderlick promoting Safe Digging Month on radio.*



*Brent Saltzman on WAFB promoting April Safe Digging Month*



*(left) Brent Saltzman with CGA keynote speaker former NASA Astronaut Colonel Mike Mullane*



(r) Billy Forest cooking up a gumbo at LGA's GasTEC Expo Day



Diggers Night Out at Lafayette Area Utility Coordinating Council



Greg Galle speaks to attendees at the Lafayette Area Utility Coordinating Council Diggers Night Out

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LOUISIANA GAS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

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AUG 12-15, 2024 | HILTON RIVERSIDE, NEW ORLEANS, LA

Find more info at [LouisianaGas.org/PSC](https://LouisianaGas.org/PSC)

**GASTEC Expo Day**  
March 13 | Zachary, LA

**Scholarship Golf Tournament**  
May 16 | Jennings, LA

**College Scholarship Program**  
July 1 | Application Deadline

**Sporting Clay Tournament**  
October 4 | Port Allen, LA

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# CGA's 50-in-5 Challenge: Moving the Industry Forward



50  
in  
5

Last spring, the Common Ground Alliance issued a bold challenge to the industry: reduce damages by 50% over five years. In the year since CGA's 50-in-5 initiative was announced, it has captured the attention of damage prevention professionals and created inertia behind the drive for serious reductions in damages after years of stagnation in national damage rates.

## The Damage Prevention Institute

CGA's Damage Prevention Institute (DPI) is poised to play a pivotal role in 50-in-5 by bringing true shared accountability to the way the industry functions. DPI participation is open to all CGA members at no cost. DPI accredited organizations have the support of leadership in adhering to CGA Best Practices and submit damage and other key metrics to DPI's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) on a monthly basis. As this part of CGA grows, it will provide the industry with richer and more timely data.

## What DIRT data tells us

The most recent DIRT Report revealed concerning increases across key damage indicators. Excavation activity continues to increase as states work to improve infrastructure, along with a significant influx of funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Three-year modeling from 2020-2022 reveals that damages per construction spending rose 12.35% and damages per 1,000 transmissions rose 9.34% between 2021 and 2022. A regression

analysis of consistent 2020-2022 data which considered additional variables including weather, population and infrastructure density further confirms that damages were at best flat and likely increasing.

The analysis of 2022 data indicates that a few persistent challenges are responsible for nearly 76% of damages that occur, including no notification to the 811 center; failure to pothole and/or maintain sufficient clearance; facilities not marked or marked inaccurately due to locator error; and other improper excavation practices. No-notification damages make up more than 25% of all damages, with 77% of no-notification damages attributed to professional excavators. Focusing industry efforts and outreach on these top challenges is key to achieving 50-in-5.

The Report urges stakeholders to commit to working within organizations and across stakeholder groups to generate new solutions to the persistent, systemic issues causing the majority of damages. Recommendations provided to address specific root cause groups included:

- **No-Notification Root Cause:** Focus excavator outreach on behavioral change—namely consistent and effective use of 811—and help restore excavator confidence in the system through improved locating processes.
- **Excavation Root Causes:** Prioritize tolerance zone safety, address contracts to provide adequate compensation for potholing and provide excavators with access to map visualizations.
- **Locator Error Root Causes:** Enhance facility maps to GIS-grade, address contract structures to emphasize timeliness and accuracy, and increase efficiency through effective use of the 811 system.

As more organizations become DPI accredited and submit metrics on a monthly basis, CGA and DPI look forward to expanding the range of analysis and recommendations. CGA is also developing a DIRT index to better help quantify damages annually and evaluate 50-in-5 progress.

## New telecom research

CGAs recently released white paper, “Telecom’s Critical Role in Reversing Utility Damage Trends,” analyzes information gathered from 17 in-depth interviews with telecom leaders as well as data from a survey of more than 500 damage prevention industry professionals.

This new telecom industry research underscores the impact that this sector has on the U.S. damage prevention system. According to 2022 DIRT data, telecom facilities sustained more damage than any other utility type, while telecom work contributed to the majority of damages to buried infrastructure. Similarly, telecom companies are more likely to deliver late locates of their own facilities, but are also most likely to have work delayed by late locates. As \$65 billion in federal funding is being deployed to expand high-speed internet across the Nation concurrently with hundreds of billions of federal and state dollars going to additional infrastructure improvements, CGAs new research calls for the telecom sector to make damage prevention a priority.

CGAs Telecom White Paper summarizes quantitative data from the survey and qualitative information from in-depth telecom stakeholder interviews and consolidates them into four key takeaways:

1. The telecom sector has the most potential to impact the U.S. damage prevention system – and its own bottom line.
2. Growth and customer satisfaction are prioritized over damage prevention by many telecom stakeholders.
3. Rather than focus on long-term national standardization strategies to reduce damages, telecom can achieve more timely results by improving internal practices and contracts.
4. Securing executive-level buy-in from telecom facility owner/operators on rigorous damage prevention standards will be necessary to reverse the upward trend of damages to U.S. infrastructure.

**Accurate, accessible facility maps are foundational to success**

Whether examining top damage root causes reported to DIRT or reviewing CGAs in-depth stakeholder research related to telecom, locating and excavating stakeholders, one foundational communication tool comes up again and again: accurate, accessible facility maps.

Without up-to-date, GPS-grade facility maps accessible in a GIS environment, we are asking locators and excavators to do their jobs without the best possible information. CGAs Next Practices Initiative has highlighted this issue in both of its industry reports and has also documented a first-of-its-kind pilot program out of Minnesota that serves as a model for how the industry could transform.

The ambitious Minnesota Utilities Mapping Project (MUMP) aims to provide real-time, ticket-level mapped visualizations of underground utilities to accredited designers, locators and excavators to improve the damage prevention system’s efficiency and outcomes. The pilot project leveraged widely accessible technology to create a tool that has the potential to revolutionize the viewing of underground utility maps for major stakeholder groups.

Led by Gopher State One Call with input from the Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council, the pilot program uses an open-source software solution that connects to the GSOC ticketing system and captures all relevant ticket information, including the geographic area indicated on the ticket. The program then returns a digital report of the area of interest in the form of a visualization of buried facility data, which can be accessible to end users, including designers, locators, excavators and others, for the life of the 811 ticket.

## Innovation wins

To achieve the 50-in-5 goal, innovative and data-driven approaches like the Minnesota Utilities Mapping Project must become the norm rather than the exception. CGA looks forward to working with our members to make dramatic strides over the next several years. 🗺️

# The Challenges of Repairing Rural Water Lines in an Urbanizing Area

## *Bear Creek Water Association Employs a Vacuum Excavator*

Written by Cori Sellars, product marketing lead

Provided by: Vermeer MV Solutions, Piedmont, SC



*Nolan Williams, General Manager, Bear Creek Water Association*

**B**ear Creek Water Association, Inc. (BCWA) provides water and sewer services to approximately 50,000 people in a 105-square-mile (272.2 m<sup>2</sup>) service area in the rapidly urbanizing south Madison County region. The service area is located between the cities of Ridgeland to the south, Canton to the north, Flora to the west, and the Ross Barnett Reservoir to the east. BCWA has nearly 20,000 water meters in its system, making it the second-largest water provider in central Mississippi (after the City of Jackson) and the largest rural water association in the state.

BCWA's system consists of pipes of different sizes, ranging from 2 inches to 16 inches (5.1 cm to 40.6 cm) in diameter. The majority of the system is made up of 8-inch (20.3 cm) pipes, but there are also significant sections of 12-inch and 16-inch (30.5 cm to 40.6 cm) pipes. This is because the system includes water wells spread throughout the county, which necessitates the use of larger diameter pipes for efficient water

distribution. However, the increasing urbanization and the presence of more underground utilities, such as electric lines and sidewalks, have posed new challenges for BCWA.

“We initially served customers in rural areas, but now our services extend to subdivisions, commercial areas, and more,” said Nolan Williamson, general manager for BCWA. “As the area has grown, we have noticed an increase in water and sewer line repairs. In the past, people mainly needed to be mindful of water, sewer, and gas lines when digging. However, due to the area's growth, there are now multiple fiber, electrical, cable TV, and telephone lines to consider. The use of utility poles for installation has decreased.”

To make repairs, the team at BCWA has primarily relied on trackhoes (backhoe loaders) and mini excavators. However, in some environments, using these common equipment fleet staples of most rural water associations can potentially cause additional damage that will need to be addressed.

The biggest challenge today in

repairing the water lines is dealing with the obstacles and costs associated with these repairs. With increasing urbanization, simple repairs that used to involve digging a hole, fixing the pipe, and filling it back in have become more complicated. Cutting into the ground now risks damaging other utilities, resulting in additional expenses.

### **Finding another way**

According to Williamson, “Ideally, each type of utility would have its own designated area and run parallel to each other. However, that is not usually the case. We have numerous utilities that run throughout the county at similar depths and are located just a few feet (meters) away from our water and sewer lines. Fiber lines are often positioned on top of our own lines, so when we need to perform repairs, we have to navigate around them. Since each leak is unique, it's beneficial to have a range of options to choose from.

So, BCWA began exploring alternative digging methods several years ago to reduce utility damage during repairs and restoration work.

“We needed a more precise digging method, and we found the solution in Madison County, where horizontal directional drilling (HDD) crews were using vacuum excavators to verify utility locates before drilling. The use of small holes and minimal ground disturbance made us realize the benefits of incorporating soft digging methods into our operations.”

While HDD crews use vacuum excavators for potholing, the BCWA team believed they could also use them to help avoid extra work when repairing water lines. So, in 2017, BCWA purchased a Vermeer® VX50 vacuum excavator equipped with a 4-in (10.2-cm) suction hose, a 1,025-cfm (29-m<sup>3</sup>/min) blower, and a 500-gal (1,893-liter) debris tank. This model is well-suited for the yazoo clay ground conditions in Madison County and the average depths of buried utilities, which range from 3 ft to 6 ft (.9 m to 1.8 m) deep.

Now when there is a water line leak, BCWA follows a systematic process for efficient repairs. They start by calling 811, the utility locating service. A team member assesses the problem and shuts off the valves to stop the water flow. While waiting for locates, the team determines the necessary equipment, including the vacuum excavator for areas with multiple underground utilities. Time is crucial once the water valve is shut off, as the water supply to properties has been cut off. The team works quickly to minimize inconvenience to customers and prevent damage to other utilities.

The importance of the vacuum excavator in this process becomes evident. Using it has helped the BCWA team efficiently excavate without damaging other utilities and minimizing the risk of service disruptions.

### Efficient repair process

The BCWA team utilizes a vacuum excavator to dig around utilities. This approach helps to minimize the size of the repair working area and helps maintain a cleaner site. By using this method, the team has been able to eliminate the need to repour driveways, resod yards and incur additional costs from damaging nearby utility lines in certain situations.

When digging, BCWA's crew sets the water pressure at 3000 PSI (206 bar). This pressure is typically sufficient for extracting and loosening up the soil without causing damage to any

underground utilities. The material is suctioned into the debris tank and hauled off.

“Most of the material we excavate can be reused once it's dried since we're only digging with water,” said Williamson. “That can take some time to dry it out, so we bring in dry material to refill the hole. While the process of bringing in other dirt to fill a hole may seem like an extra step, using the Vermeer vacuum excavator helps us minimize the hole size, so we don't deal with a lot of material in most cases. Bringing in a little bit of extra dirt is more cost-effective than incurring restoration costs by using larger equipment and having to pile dirt next to the hole.”

Furthermore, using a vacuum excavator provides a more efficient and less physically demanding method and the need for manual labor with shovels. This decision aligns with Bear Creek's commitment to delivering cost savings to its customers.

### Another machine in the fleet

The team still utilizes trackhoes and mini excavators for a large portion of the repairs they make. But the Vermeer vacuum excavator has earned its spot in BCWA's equipment fleet, too.

According to Williamson, the vacuum excavator is not used daily but is regularly employed for potholing utilities and excavating areas where traditional digging methods are challenging.

He explains, “The vacuum excavator does not replace the mini excavator but serves a different purpose. It can do things that a mini excavator cannot do. They are two complementary pieces that help us find the best, quickest, and cheapest way to make a repair.”

Williamson also acknowledges the initial learning curve, stating, “In the early stages, we had a lot more questions than we do now, and the team at Vermeer MidSouth assisted us every step of the way. They ensured that our staff knew how to use the vacuum excavator and continue to support our service and parts needs to this day.”


### Growing need for vacuum excavators

Vacuum excavators are not only beneficial for rural water systems like BCWA, but also for many municipal systems, according to Williamson. With the increasing number of utilities being placed underground, Williamson

believes a vacuum excavator should be part of the fleets of municipalities and rural water associations.

Over the past few decades, there have been significant changes in labor, parts, and material costs, as well as increased public scrutiny of water outages. As a result, having a specialized machine like a vacuum excavator is important for making repairs around other underground utilities or in areas where restoration costs make other digging methods impractical.

The BCWA team have also recognized the value of vacuum excavators for routine maintenance tasks, such as cleaning around water valves. In fact, a few years ago, when Jackson, Mississippi's water system experienced a major outage, BCWA deployed a vacuum excavator crew to assist in locating water valves in the affected areas and restoring the water supply.

“We have gained valuable experience since investing in our Vermeer VX50 vacuum excavator. These machines are not limited to HDD contractors; anyone involved in digging around utilities can benefit from having a vacuum excavator in their fleet,” Williamson concluded. 

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## CenterPoint Energy Damage Prevention Shares the Safe Digging Message at Houston Astros FanFest Event

**T**he Damage Prevention team sponsored a booth this past January at the annual Astros FanFest event. This event gives fans photo opportunities, exclusive meet and greets, and the chance to throw a ball on the field at Minute Maid Park.

Hundreds of fans attended the event and were able to interact with event sponsors and booths, including a chance to spin the prize wheel at the CenterPoint Energy table. Attendees were informed on safe digging practices and educated about the free 811 service to have their utilities located prior to any digging projects at home. Each guest was able to spin the wheel for a chance to take home an 811 prize.

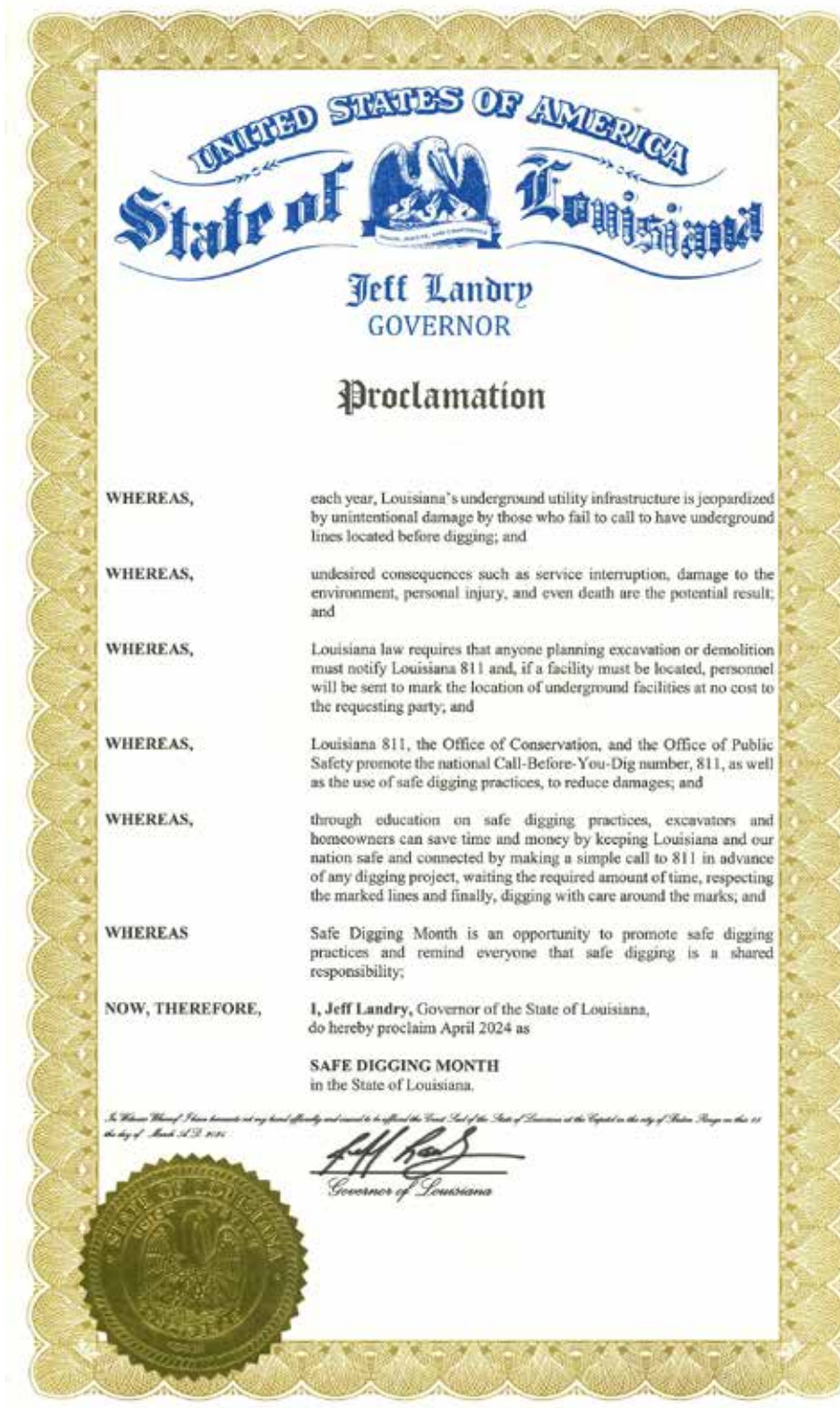
“The first step to preventing a damage when digging is to use the 811 service to have lines marked,” says Enrique Reyes, Manager, Texas Damage Prevention. “Many Houston residents are not aware of the free call before you dig service, and our team is eager to help increase awareness and help keep our communities safe.”

The proceeds of the entry fees go toward the Astros Foundation, which is a team-led non-profit that “seek[s] to harness the passion of our fans to support youth sports and education programs, the recognition/honor of our nation’s military, childhood cancer and domestic violence awareness and efforts to reduce homelessness. 🏠





# April Designated Safe Digging Month



**We appreciate Governor Jeff Landry supporting our endeavor to keep Louisiana a safe place to live and work.**

*One may ask, why is April designated as Safe Digging Month? Shouldn't every month be a safe digging month? The best answer I can provide is the fact that homeowners are typically very busy planting trees, shrubbery and creating gardens this time of year...especially in April. And what better time to remind folks to do the right thing by contacting 8-1-1 prior to digging to have those underground utilities marked. It's free, easy and it's the law.*



Blew & Associates stands as a premier full-service firm specializing in surveying, engineering, and environmental solutions, with a particular focus on private utility locating. Our suite of services encompasses Private Utility Locating, Subsurface Utility Engineering (Levels A, B, and C), 3D and GPR Concrete Scanning, and Sewer Inspections. We are committed to delivering unparalleled precision in utility location for each of our valued clients. This commitment is underscored by our rigorous quality control and assessment protocols, ensuring accuracy and reliability in every project we undertake.

As a proud member of Louisiana 811, Blew & Associates recognizes the vital importance of facilitating seamless coordination between public and private utility locates. We are dedicated to educating stakeholders about the distinctions between these entities, fostering greater awareness, and ultimately enhancing safety across all work sites. By actively participating in Louisiana 811, we contribute to the creation of a safer, more informed environment for all involved parties.

At Blew & Associates, our mission extends beyond mere service provision; it encompasses a commitment to excellence, innovation, and safety. Through our unwavering dedication to delivering precise utility locations and our active engagement with Louisiana 811, we strive to set the standard for reliability and professionalism in the industry. With Blew & Associates, clients can trust in our expertise to navigate the complexities of utility locating with efficiency and accuracy, ensuring optimal outcomes for every project.



There are other businesses who can boast celebrating 57 Years in operation, but not many who can claim to have a president/CEO who was one of the original employees when the company opened its doors. When Floyd Degueyter accepted the Parts manager job with the new business even he did not imagine that within just a few years he would progress to General manager and then to owner of the growing company.

Floyd's passion for the equipment business, the company's customers, and his 'Team' has led to expanding from a single store in Lafayette, Louisiana to three full service branches strategically located across the west-central Gulf Coast.

At CLM Equipment we are proud of our 57 year tradition of 'Partnering with Others to Develop Our Communities', and we are passionate about going above and beyond to serve the equipment needs of our commercial, municipal, and industrial customers.

Our state of the art facilities located in Lafayette, Lake Charles, and Houston are staffed with industry professionals, ready to serve your equipment needs with equipment sales, rentals, parts, and service:

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Whether your needs include equipment purchase or leasing, rentals, parts, or service, we look forward to helping you find the right solution, at the right time and the right price, right where you need it.

Contact your nearest CLM location at 800-CLM-0490 to see how we can make a difference for you.



Established in 1996, we are a pavement preservation contractor based in Port Allen, LA. Our goal is to extend the life of pavements by using cost-effective methods and

applications. Our services include, but are not limited to road network evaluations, crack sealing, asphalt rejuvenation, high polymer fog seals, and a broom applied Texture seal. With over 300 miles of roadway treated in South Louisiana, our customers are seeing a big return on their preservation efforts. As construction costs increase, the only way to stay ahead is to prolong the life of the goods roads that municipalities have in their network. Other than preservation, we also produce our PM+ High Performance Cold Patch that is used throughout LA and MS.

We value being a member of LA811 as we have used their services several times while expanding the footprint of our primary yard in Port Allen. As there are several plants and pipelines in the area, LA811 has created a streamlined process that notifies all of the necessary parties to mark our property in a timely manner.

Material Resources, Inc. (LA Contractors License No. 37294) 225-267-646 [colby@materialresources.org](mailto:colby@materialresources.org)



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RAMCO, LLC is a leading “Full-Service” Right-of-Way maintenance company, providing a comprehensive range of services with equipment capable of handling any terrain. With a strong focus on customer satisfaction, we have built our success on delivering high-quality service and reliable equipment. As a family-owned business, we take pride in conducting our operations with honesty and integrity for the past 30 years.

Our mission at RAMCO, LLC is to support our customers in a safe and efficient manner, helping them delivering the goods they transport. We achieve this by providing top-notch service and equipment that meet and exceed customer expectations. Our success is driven by our well-trained and qualified employees, dependable equipment, and innovative processes.

RAMCO, LLC proudly serves a wide range of areas, including Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Our commitment to providing exceptional services extends to all these regions, ensuring that our customers receive the support they need, regardless of their location.

By becoming an 811 member we can help support the education that is needed to protect our employees, the public and our valued customers.

|                          |                        |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Office Locations:</b> | <b>District Office</b> | <b>District Office</b> |
| <b>Main Office</b>       | 2935 Phillips Way      | 11705 Hwy 35 South     |
| 2545 West Park Ave       | Port Allen, LA 70767   | Kaplan, LA 70548       |
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Vermeer Corporation as the authorized dealership for Texas and southern Louisiana. For more than 40 years, we have grown to be the region’s leader in providing the tools, equipment and support our customers need to get the job done. In short, we equip you to do more.

Our relationship with Louisiana 811 is invaluable to us, our customers and the community at large in that it has helped us reach people in the utility and construction industries to provide them with the quality support they need to not only do an effective job but do it safely. When we all do our part to put safety first, everyone wins.

When you are looking for equipment to help with underground drilling or locating existing utilities, call Vermeer Texas-Louisiana in Baton Rouge, and remember to always call 811 before you dig!

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*ACTS Now, Inc.*

# PRESS RELEASE

***ACTS Now, Inc. enhances commitment to protecting vital infrastructure and public safety through acquisition of Excavation Safety Alliance products and services.***

**Conway, AR — April 1, 2024**

ACTS Now, Inc. (ACTS), a pioneering force in damage prevention and public safety, announces its recent acquisition of a suite of products and services from Excavation Safety Alliance (ESA). This strategic move fortifies ACTS' mission to serve as the premier positive resource for effective damage prevention and public safety.

The acquisition includes key assets such as the ESA Global Excavation Safety Conference, the Excavation Safety Magazine, the Excavation Safety Guide, the Excavation Safety Alliance Membership Program, and the Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance. These additions align seamlessly with ACTS' longstanding dedication to advancing public safety and fostering collaboration within industry stakeholders.

Founded in 2007, ACTS has been at the forefront of proactive initiatives, initially collaborating with Sam Johnson and Mississippi 811 to address regulatory gaps within state dig laws. Over the years, ACTS has spearheaded initiatives like the 811 Magazine and the Damage Prevention Summit, aimed at cultivating vital relationships at the state level.

Roger Cox, President of ACTS, commented on the acquisition, stating, "The integration of ESA's offerings perfectly complements our vision and aligns with ESA's mission to save lives through education and collaboration. By melding insights from state-level events with global perspectives showcased at the Global Excavation Safety Conference, we aim to foster a dynamic exchange of ideas, education, and networking opportunities."

Cox further added, "We are exploring avenues to extend membership in the organization to our existing 811 Magazine subscribers and Damage Prevention Summit attendees. Additionally, the popular Town Hall talks will continue to serve as a platform for industry stakeholders to shape the future of excavation safety and damage prevention."

As part of this evolution, ACTS is undergoing a rebranding initiative to reflect its renewed vision and direction. Blending these resources promises to elevate public safety standards and empower stakeholders with enhanced effectiveness.

Stay tuned for forthcoming announcements as ACTS embarks on this transformative journey to bolster damage prevention without boundaries.

For more information, please contact:

Roger Cox, 501-269-1000, [roger@aligningchange.com](mailto:roger@aligningchange.com)



*Congratulations to Daniel Brooks with T. Baker Smith for winning the Global Locate Masters competition at Global Excavation Safety Conference*



*Louisiana 811 team at the Global Excavation Safety Conference*



*Kinder Morgan demo at the Global Excavation Safety Conference presented by Molly Smith and Mark Hanks*



*Entergy Arc and Spark demo at the Global Excavation Safety Conference*



*Thanks to Plains Pipeline for displaying our banner in North LA with Jeff Morrison (r)*



*Jeff Morrison presenting at the Trenchless Technology Auger Boring School hosted by LA Tech*

# the **JACOBI**

## P E R S P E C T I V E

### Leadership

There are many definitions of leadership. I did a little research. Kevin Kruse wrote a short article in Forbes titled “What is Leadership?” (see <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/#3e7a28455bgo>). He discusses what leadership is NOT and how some of our most respected business thinkers define leadership. I really like Kruse’s definition of leadership: “Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards achievement of a goal.” He describes the key elements of his definition as follows:

- Leadership stems from social influence, not authority or power
- Leadership requires others, and that implies they don’t need to be “direct reports”
- No mention of personality traits, attributes, or even a title;

there are many styles, many paths, to effective leadership

- It includes a goal, not influence with no intended outcome


Notice his last key element: a GOAL! In this case the goal is safety. Safety first! Right? Maybe not. How safe is safe? I remember an interview with Mike Rowe from a few years ago (Dirty Jobs Show). To quote Rowe: “There’s a fissure running through the expectation of what happens when we elevate ‘safety’ and feelings to a level of primacy. I think it creates a real disconnect people are struggling to parse.” And, “If safety is the priority, then let’s just wrap ourselves in bubble wrap and drive at speeds approaching five miles an hour.” As Courtney Kirchoff commented, Rowe was and is right. “Safety first” means risk second, or third, or fourth. If a job site or workplace prioritizes “your safety first” then someone else has to put your safety above everything else. This takes the responsibility of YOUR safety away from YOU. As Rowe said, there’s an unintended consequence of putting “safety first” on other people. It has come back to kick us in the throat. Now we have legions of fools who cede their safety, and other chunks of their lives like healthcare, finances, etc., to a third party. Like government.


We do not live in a “risk free” society. Every act or omission has consequences. Unless we are willing to accept the consequences of acting or refusing to act, we, as a society, can never achieve anything.

What are our goals? I like life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I also like feeling safe and secure. For example, take driving a car. I still drive a car. Drivers in Houston are probably not the best in the world. I am not so much worried about my driving as I am the driving of others. I will, if absolutely necessary, drive in states like California and New York. But I am extra cautious for two reasons – First, I am not familiar with the roads there and second, such states are not particularly concerned about the safety of their citizens. Clearly, my driving safety is MY responsibility – especially in states like California and New York.


**YOUR safety is YOUR responsibility!! Be a LEADER not a fool ceding YOUR safety to others!!** 🚚

*John Jacobi retired from PHMSA.  
For questions or comments, email:  
[jjacobi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjacobi@sbcglobal.net)*






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