

# The Virginia 811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



VIRGINIA 811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2021

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## LETTER FROM THE CEO

# B. Scott Crawford

I am continuously in awe of the underground utility industry to which we are all tied. Through the maintenance of those facilities, working at Virginia 811, locating those utilities before excavation, using Virginia 811's services and being mindful of those utilities while excavating, and/or simply taking advantage of the many contributions underground utilities make to our daily lives, we are all united through this massive underground infrastructure. Together, we benefit from and work to protect the facilities that in many ways are the foundation upon which contemporary civilization rests.

History shows us that it is not only contemporary civilization that exists because of this industry. Ancient civilizations also took shape because of the innovations introduced by underground utilities. While gas, telecommunications, and electricity would not be delivered through this underground network until the 19th century, water and sewage underground utilities date back to the birth of civilization. Only with access to potable water and the ability to safely remove human waste could hunter-gatherer nomadic peoples become sedentary and grow their populations. Without water, people would die. Without getting rid of waste people would die. Underground utilities

delivered water to growing population bases while also moving waste, and disease away.

Locators would have used blue and green paint if they were locating facilities at this time. The Garamantes who inhabited the Saharan Desert in what is today Southern Libya remind us that purple paint would have also been used. The Garamantes, who settled the region around 1000 B.C., confronted a challenge that rings familiar today: climate change. The Sahara had once been a fertile region that was in full bloom, with no indication that it would become a desert in the future. That all changed over 5,000 years ago as a drier climate grew in strength across North Africa. By 1000 B.C., the last of the many lakes dried up, and the current Sahara took shape.

Interestingly, the region thrived under regular rainfall for over 200,000+ years resulting in "fossil water" being retained underneath the surface. While the desert existed on top, below were reservoirs of water, waiting to be tapped, brought to the surface, and dispersed for irrigation. Beginning around the 5th century B.C. the Garamantes took advantage of Persian irrigation practices and began to dig over 1000 miles of tunnels and shafts, known as foggaras, to access the fossil water for irrigation purposes.

This underscores the importance of underground utilities as these irrigation facilities allowed the Garamantes to build a civilization in the middle of an otherwise inhospitable desert, sustaining itself for over 600 years. Only when these utilities could no longer reach the fossil water did the civilization begin to collapse.

We celebrate the Virginia 811 team and its partners in the underground utility industry in this issue of The Dirt. Together, we span a rich history from the birth of civilization to our reliance on fiber that keeps us connected during a global pandemic. Enjoy the information presented in this issue, and please stay safe as we continue to navigate the many challenges that COVID continues to present. And if you want to learn more about the Garamantes, be sure to read "Kingdom of the Sands," by David Keys, in Archeology, Volume 57, No. 2, March/April 2004, pages 24-29.

- Benjamin Scott Crawford



# Virginia 811 Welcomes

## Shana Linthicum Head of IT and Operations



Virginia 811 has a new team member! We're excited to introduce Shana (pronounced Shawna) Linthicum, our new Head of IT and Operations who joined the team on July 14.

Shana is an incredibly positive individual who strongly embraces the leadership model of servant-leader. Her breadth of business experience is quite wide, with approximately 24 years of experience in the credit union and banking world.

She started her career as a teller and then advanced to a variety of leadership positions, ultimately serving at the senior management level. She has overseen branch operations, call center operations, compliance, risk management, fraud prevention, business continuity, and cybersecurity measures. Shana has also conducted internal departmental audits and has worked directly with both federal and state regulators. Also noteworthy is that Shana has experience with procurement and negotiating contracts with vendors, as well as

overseeing vendor relationships. She's supervised training programs and has helped successfully lead an organization through a core transformation. Through her efforts and leadership, she recently helped one financial institution achieve record high Compliance, Information Technology, and Information Security ratings.

Shana holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Averett University, magna cum laude, and she is a Certified Regulatory Compliance Manager through the American Bankers Association. Shana has also served as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society, Junior Achievement of the Roanoke Valley, and Children's Miracle Network.

Shana is already an asset to the Virginia 811 team, helping us serve our stakeholders and protect life and property through the protection of Virginia's underground utility infrastructure.

# Virginia 811 Announces SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Virginia 811 is proud to announce the Virginia 811 Scholarship winners for 2021. This year's recipients are Charlotte Rose and Emma Lindley. Each winner receives a \$1,500 scholarship towards their freshman year college tuition.

If their collective academic performance and passion for learning are any indicator, we're leaving the future of excavation safety in good hands. Congratulations Ladies!



**Charlotte Rose**  
Vinton, Virginia

Charlotte is a graduating senior from William Byrd High School in Vinton, Virginia and currently holds a 4.07 GPA. She studied criminal justice at the Burton Center for Arts and Technology for three consecutive years and is active with Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety. She has applied to several colleges including Virginia Tech and Hollins University.



**Emma Lindley**  
Mechanicsville, Virginia

Emma is a graduate of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School in Richmond, Virginia. She currently holds a 4.77 GPA. She is a member of National Honor Society, Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is part of the cross country and indoor/outdoor track team. She plans to attend Tulane University's School of Architecture this fall.

## FAST FACTS

10.3%

Ticket Volume Increase  
Over Last Year YTD

3.1%

Call Volume Increase  
Over Last Year

6%

Web Ticket Entry  
Increase Over Last Year

32.7%

Single Address Ticket  
Increase Over Last Year

19.3%

Ticket Revision Express  
Increase Over Last Year

69.5%

% of Internet  
Originated Tickets YTD

# MAKE THE SWITCH OFFICE BBQ CONTEST



## CONTEST WINNERS

**Infra Source, Inc.**  
Lorton, Virginia

In an effort to get users to switch from phoning in tickets to processing them online using Internet Ticket Options, Virginia 811 launched the "MAKE THE SWITCH" contest.

From April 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021 users were encouraged to increase their online ticket entries by 60% over their current ticket entries for a chance to win a free BBQ lunch for their entire office. Tickets for contest consideration needed to be valid and processed via Single Address (SAT 2.0), Web Ticket Entry (WTE), or Ticket Revision Express (TRE).

Deanna Market from Infra Source Inc. in Lorton, Virginia accepted the challenge right away and increased Infra Source's Internet Ticket Option entries by over 60%. They qualified for a chance to win - and ultimately won the random contest drawing!

Deanna and her office mates enjoyed a BBQ lunch from Dixie Bones BBQ on 811 Day, along with some Virginia 811 swag. Thank you Infra Source for making the switch to Virginia 811's Internet Ticket Options in a big way!



# 811 DAY



## IT WAS A BIG DAY!

811 Day is always a BIG DAY. It's a reminder to always contact Virginia 811 before you dig and when we thank the workers who keep our utilities safe while digging. Celebrating 811 Day (National Safe Digging Day) was so big, Virginia 811 thought – why celebrate just the one day?

So they decided to celebrate even BIGGER with an entire week of festivities!

The Virginia 811 Marketing Liaison Team spent July planning events, sponsorships, and creating brand marketing assets to promote the biggest 811 Day ever. By August, the 811 Day marketing plan was complete and included a press release, a new 811 Day web page, social media posts and images to share with stakeholders, along with customized 811 Day email signatures promoting the day and safe digging awareness.

Leading up to 811 Day, Marketing Liaisons made visits to Virginia news outlets dropping off swag coolers and press release packages. Their efforts paid off as subsequent 811 Day coverage included on-air mentions by meteorologists, reporters and anchor hosts, as well as on-air live appearances promoting 811 Day.

Virginia 811 also sponsored high-profile Virginia community events during the month - from professional baseball to auto racing - that promoted Virginia 811 and 811 Day to homeowners. These sponsorships included Virginia 811

digital displays, menu boards, print ads, promotional event interviews, live call-outs, and give-away swag items.

Two big online events were also planned: the 811 Day Video Challenge and the Virginia 811 5K or 8.11 Mile Run/Walk. Participants were encouraged to submit videos and/or participate in the Virginia 811 5K or 8.11 Mile/Run/Walk. Registered participants qualified for prizes! Proceeds from the race went to Construction Angels Virginia.

While these events were going on the Marketing Liaison Team put boots on the ground! During the week of August 11th, they visited job sites throughout Virginia delivering cold water, snacks and 811 swag to hardworking crews in the field. They talked with them about their projects and discussed how Virginia 811 could best help with their training needs. Listening and learning is always productive and meeting with stakeholders in person was a win/win!

To say 811 Day was BIG is an understatement. From creating high profile events to contests and races and more, Virginia 811 promoted awareness of what their members do day in and day out to keep utilities safe while digging. It was a BIG Day - A BIG week - a BIG month!



# See Something, Say Something.

## Virginia 811 Explores New Program to Enhance Community Involvement for Safer Digging

Are you digging without a ticket? Then don't be surprised if utility representatives make a visit to your worksite if you're in danger of damaging their facilities when digging.

In the spirit of Homeland Security's initiative, "See Something, Say Something.", Virginia 811 encourages citizens to notify authorities when they see suspicious behavior or potential security threats. Virginia 811 has a procedure in place to allow anyone identifying excavation that may be occurring with no visible utilities marked or the potential for damage, to have the affected utilities notified.

Initially, a Senior Damage Prevention Specialist (Senior DPS) conducts a ticket search. If a ticket is identified, the Senior DPS assures the caller that a ticket exists and thanks the individual for contacting Virginia 811. If no excavation ticket is found, all potentially affected utilities are notified without charge.

During much of 2021, Virginia 811 representatives worked with some of its members and the Notification Center's ticket entry software company to explore the feasibility of expanding this program. An analysis was completed and an idea took shape. What if an application was available to Members, where they could notify potentially affected utilities where excavation was occurring without a valid ticket? While not in development at this time, the analysis continues and this application could be useful in helping eliminate digging without a ticket in the future.

For now, procedures are in place to direct information about excavation sites without a valid ticket to affected utilities. So, if you're risking life and property by breaking ground without a ticket, don't be surprised if representatives from utilities show up to discuss your decisions in more detail and remind you that if you are digging - no matter how deep or shallow or how sure you feel that you "know where utility lines are" - it's your civic responsibility to excavate with a valid ticket.

"See Something, Say Something." Protecting Virginia's underground utility infrastructure is everyone's duty. Be sure to dig safely and to have a valid ticket.



## New Online ToolKit Provides Virginia 811 Brand Resources

What happens when you have an "Aha moment"? One of our board members started with a good idea and it went fast from there! After National Safe Digging Month this board member suggested having images available through VA811.com that stakeholders could use for letterhead, email signatures, and general promotion of 811 messaging in celebration of Safe Digging Month. The Marketing Team was asked to explore that idea for April 2022.

Why wait? So they went to work immediately. In the weeks leading up to 811 National Safe Digging Day the Marketing Team had already designed a new landing page for resources that stakeholders could view to learn more about 811 Day events and contests. In addition stakeholders were able to access content to be used for letterhead, email signatures, social media posts, PSA videos promoting safe digging and 811, and press releases. This page, found under "Resources" on the website



VA811.com allowed stakeholders to access content. Having these ready-made assets made spreading the word about 811 Day much easier.

A new **Virginia 811 Toolkit** landing page now provides general content related to Virginia 811 and safe digging messaging that stakeholders can use throughout the year. Do you have an email where a unique Virginia 811 image could enhance your signature? Are you looking for social media content for your company page that supports 811 messaging? You can easily find all that and more! Press releases will also be available on this page, and new videos with links will keep the page fresh and relevant.

Check out all Virginia 811 has to offer and start using this content in emails, newsletters, web pages and social media today!

## Millionth Ticket Virginia 811 Hits Major Milestone on 811 Day

Each year our industry celebrates 811 Day - National Safe Digging Day on August 11th. As it turns out our contact center also processed our one millionth ticket on the same day. What a coincidence!

Courtney Brown of Falconer Construction Company entered the millionth ticket through her WTE account as an Update ticket. After completing additional training, she was recently granted access to process 3 Hour Notices. This means that the majority of her ticket entry needs can be done online. Courtney is thrilled with being able to enter tickets online. "WTE is easy to use... it's easier to map tickets online versus calling in."

Courtney's certain that if individuals would give Web Ticket Entry (WTE) a shot, they would love it as much as she does. She encourages others to find which internet ticket option works best and use it!

If you need more information on Virginia 811's internet ticket options, contact Nikki Turpin at [nturpin@VA811.com](mailto:nturpin@VA811.com) or 703.994.5177.



**Courtney Brown**  
Falconer Construction

# ARE YOU ON MUTE?



## August Team Huddle Focuses on the Importance of Engagement Through Employee Feedback

Virginia 811 team members are our most valuable assets! In order to ensure continuous improvement, and to better engage team members, it is important that everyone has an opportunity to present their ideas and voice their concerns. Over the course of the Pandemic while using video conferencing, almost everyone has probably either been asked or has asked someone “are you on mute?” as a colleague speaks on camera but no sound emerges. Inspired by this scenario, Virginia 811 created a team huddle titled “Are you on Mute?” when President & CEO Scott Crawford met with the Virginia 811 team members.

The huddle addressed the importance of “hearing” team members. Virginia 811 wants to be certain that no one is “on mute” by providing everyone methods to express themselves. Team members are encouraged to meet with their immediate supervisors, place suggestions in the online Suggestion Box, or fill out a digital succession plan matrix to indicate the roles into which they want to grow. And our CEO, department heads, and managers offer “open office” hours where

team members can speak directly with them. The Executive team then reviews team member input for possible future application.

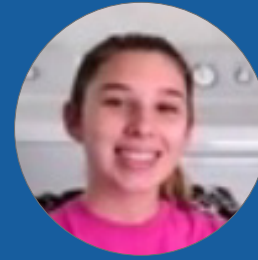
In addition to making sure the wider team is “not on mute,” Scott addressed several other important items. During the team huddle, for example, he discussed Virginia 811’s standards regarding the use of marijuana due to changes in Virginia law. Scott stated that because of Virginia 811’s commitment to the safety of all Virginia citizens and underground utility infrastructure, the use of marijuana is prohibited within the workforce as it has always been prior to July 1 changes in the law. And in further safety concerns, Scott announced that the entire team will continue working remotely for the remainder of the year so that all team members are protected from the spread of the COVID-19 variants in the workplace.

The bottom line... Virginia 811 encourages team members to stay “off mute” by advocating open communication, committing to training and safety in the workplace and providing resources needed to process quality tickets.



# FIRST CLASS

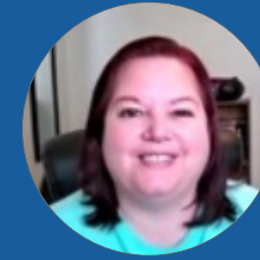
## Damage Preventive Specialists Complete Training in the Virtual World



Kaitlyn Lumpkin



Kelly Cooper



Michelle Jones



Nicole Hodges



Rana Outlaw

Congratulations to Kaitlyn Lumpkin, Kelly Cooper, Michelle Jones, Nicole Hodges, and Rana Outlaw on their promotion from Damage Prevention Associate (DPA) to **Damage Prevention Specialist (DPS)**. They are officially the first class that completed all of their training virtually at Virginia 811!

Their promotion comes after successfully completing Virginia 811’s rigorous training program. DPA training begins with learning about the Virginia Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act and how Virginia 811 incorporates the Law and the Rules for Enforcement in all ticket taking policies and procedures. As a damage prevention partner, Virginia 811 emphasizes the relationships between excavators and utility operators (and their contract locators) to help ensure everyone’s safety. The training teaches how the components of the law are used in the development of the ticket entry software as well as the steps needed (procedures) to complete each ticket accurately.

Additional training focuses on the verification of the specific location of excavation to include the county or city, address or intersection, and an accurate description of where the work or excavation is taking place. The DPAs take that

information and verify the location of excavation on a map to notify the specific utility operators of the excavator’s intent to excavate in the vicinity of their underground utility lines.

Once the DPAs complete the initial training courses, they are assigned a mentor who serves as a coach throughout the first 90 days. To support the DPAs when they begin working directly with our customers, the mentors live-monitor and audit their progress to ensure that the tickets they produce are accurate. The partnership between the DPA and mentor remains interactive during the introductory period and continues throughout their career.

Thanks to our mentors, **Alice Miller, Amanda Cottrell, Deena Jordan, and Stacey Clark** for their support and hard work!



# GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD WINNER

## Amanda Cottrel



Virginia 811 2021 Golden Shovel Award Recipient 2nd Quarter

Amanda has worked at Virginia 811 since 2017. She was recently promoted from Senior Damage Prevention Mentoring Specialist to an Operations Supervisor.

It's no wonder Amanda was nominated for the Golden Shovel Award. As the person who nominated her said, Amanda is an incredible mentor. In that role she's proven to be a skilled and thoughtful relationship partner, and she's committed to understanding and reinforcing a person's potential. For example, in early 2021 Amanda provided Senior DPS and ticket taking training for an employee transferring into the Operations department. She made herself completely available to that person by encouraging trust and creating a solid learning environment.

Amanda also showcased her skills by demonstrating the ticket taking process while being monitored by the DPS team member. In turn, she provided feedback to the DPS during live monitors. Amanda researched difficult Excavation Area and mapping scenarios to bolster the DPS's skills and self-confidence. They reviewed procedures together, role played, and conducted Q&A sessions to enhance training. Amanda continuously supported the team member, even after their initial training was completed.

“ Amanda is well respected among her teammates and the leadership team. She always goes the extra mile! ”



# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Team Members Celebrate Their Service to Virginia 811 This Quarter

Check out all of the work anniversaries happening this quarter! We're celebrating a combined 60 years of experience with the Virginia 811 team.

**Marty Mitchem**  
7/13/2002 | 19 Years of Service

**Alixandra Dean**  
7/29/2019 | 2 Years of Service

**Garry Finley**  
9/29/2004 | 17 Years of Service

**Chuck Emerson**  
7/29/2019 | 2 Years of Service

**Amanda Cottrell**  
8/11/2017 | 4 Years of Service

**Michael White**  
7/29/2019 | 2 Years of Service

**Nikki Turpin**  
7/16/2018 | 3 Years of Service

**Fernando Mendez**  
9/2/2020 | 1 Year of Service

**Kim Asbury**  
7/30/2018 | 3 Years of Service

**Alexis Harris**  
9/8/2020 | 1 Year of Service

**Danielle Hess**  
7/30/2018 | 3 Years of Service

**Kimberly Swope**  
9/8/2020 | 1 Year of Service

**Jerry Altice**  
7/29/2019 | 2 Years of Service

Happy Anniversary to all and thanks for being such valuable team members.

