

# The Virginia 811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



**va 811.com**



Dig With **CARE**

VIRGINIA 811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2022





# LETTER FROM THE CEO

## B. Scott Crawford

2021 not only marked the first full year living with the Pandemic, it also marked a record year for Virginia 811. Virginia 811 witnessed a 5.6% increase in ticket volume over 2020. For the first time since 2007, Virginia 811 broke even, financially, in January 2021. The year did not slow down even as December witnessed its traditional decline in tickets. And that decline did not drop to 2020 or 2019 levels. We have all felt the impact of increased ticket volume while still navigating challenges the Pandemic has produced.

The largest type of work for 2021 was fence installation. I cannot help but think this is a reflection of the "Covid Puppy" phenomenon where so many individuals and families went out and got a puppy to keep them company during the Pandemic. Numerous Virginia 811 team members followed this trend and brought puppies into their homes. As for my family, my wife and kids somehow convinced me to bring a bunny into our family. I have to admit that Bucky Bun Bun has been a fantastic addition!

I'm sure many of you are familiar with a new term called "Covid Babies," to describe those babies born during the Pandemic. I am so happy that two of our team members are currently expecting children who will be part of the Covid Baby phenomena. Our Controller will have given birth to a little girl, Lydia, by

the time you are reading this, and we have a DPS who will become a mother in the coming months. We're so happy for them.

I avoided adding a puppy to my household and I'm too old to think about new children, but I did fully succumb to another Pandemic trend: the procurement of a magical cooking machine, the air fryer. This wonderful cooking tool has changed my life. I can easily make wings that rival local restaurants. I can seamlessly take frozen fries and make them crunchy and golden brown in minutes. This machine is amazing, and I fully embrace the concept that "air" counterbalances "fryer," making the food seem healthy!

I'm extremely excited about being the next featured "cook" as part of a continuing cooking series for our team. These cooking classes have been popular among our team members and have featured a nationally renowned chef, Chef T, and Virginia 811's founder and previous CEO, Rick Pevarski. Both Chef T and Rick ("Chef P"?) did an amazing job engaging participants as they helped them create some wonderful dishes. Rick's Paella was the best I had ever had!

My own cooking event for our team will be a little less formal. My culinary lesson focuses on foods that can only be made in air fryers and microwave ovens. Participants will learn to make some of the best wings

ever, using a special hot sauce manufactured in Roanoke, Virginia. We will learn how to cook fries just right in an air fryer and how to make perfect nachos in the microwave! Of course, participants will learn about the history of each food item along the way, providing our team with a unique and fun way to engage with one another. Leading up to the event, we'll be giving away air fryers to several team members who sign up for the session to ensure more people find the true happiness air fryers bring to individuals and families!

Ultimately, this event highlights an important topic for all businesses: how to engage and connect team members in a safe way, especially if the team continues to work remotely? Virginia 811 continues to have its team work predominantly at home in order to ensure it can provide services to all of its stakeholders. Being remote, we simply must create opportunities for our team to engage each other. While many of these opportunities are more formal and business oriented, such as our recent Winter Workshop, it is important to also create opportunities for engagement that are fun.

2021 was a very busy year, and no one at Virginia 811 knows this more than the DPS. They have done an exceptional job working with callers to create accurate tickets. And even as, for the first time, Internet Originated Tickets, those not being called in, have reached 69.8% of all ticket volume, it is good to know that the roughly 30% of called in tickets are being handled by nothing less than an exceptional team.

- B. Scott Crawford  
President & CEO  
Virginia 811

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Letter from the CEO ..... 2
- Review of AI 2041 ..... 4
- Virginia 811 Fast Facts ..... 5
- Recently Adopted Regulations .... 6
- GIS Class Graduates ..... 7
- New Educational Partnership ..... 7
- Recent Mentorship Course ..... 8
- Virginia 811 Scholarship 2022 ..... 9
- Looking Back. Moving Forward. .... 10
- Team Member Anniversaries ..... 12
- Saying Goodbye ..... 13
- Golden Shovel Winners ..... 14





# Picturing the World in 20 Years

## Review of AI 2041: Ten Visions for Our Future

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly impacting our lives in a host of ways. Whether it helps drive news articles to you in newsfeeds on social media, allows you to use voice commands with smartphones, monitors your credit card use to detect fraud, or plots the fastest route to your destination, AI is with us, and it's going to integrate itself into our lives more in the coming years. The way in which AI gets to "know" us and help us in our daily lives seems almost magical – even mystical at times. We tend to delude ourselves into thinking that AI has some level of sentience and consciousness, forgetting it is nothing but 1s and 0s programmed by humans to "behave" a certain way. Machine learning adds to this mystical quality, but even that is ultimately a result of human programming. AI is amazing, but it is limited, it is flawed, and it is even biased.

Authors, Kai-Fu Lee and Chen Qiufan, collaborated to write an engaging and informative book on AI. Lee, who served as an exec with Microsoft and served as president of Google China, and Qiufan, an award-winning sci-fi author, attempt to predict how AI will evolve in the next twenty years helping readers better understand AI technologies. AI 2041: Ten Visions for our Future consists of ten chapters. Each chapter begins with a story about life in 2041 that highlights specific AI technology that exists today, or that will soon exist, but has developed along a very probable trajectory. These visions of the future are both exciting and, at times, scary. Following



each narrative is an analysis of the AI featured in the story. The analysis provides a basic, yet informative, overview of AI technologies and explores how that technology functions and how it can evolve.

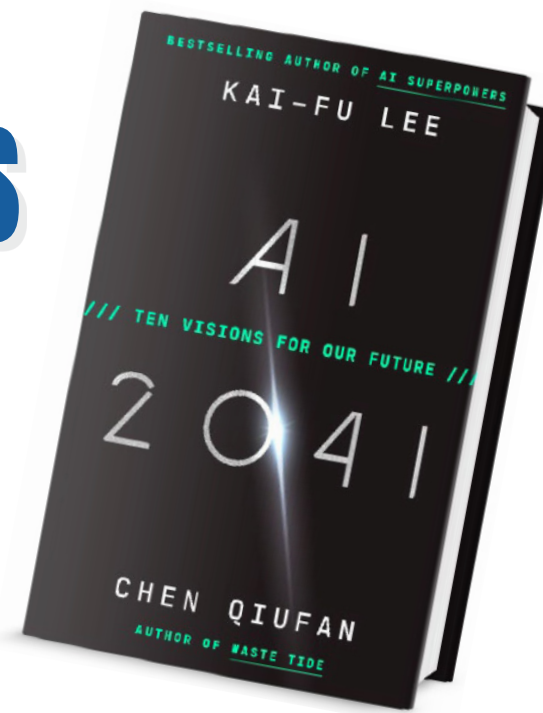
This format, combining sci-fi with an analysis, provides readers with an immersive experience that sparks the imagination. Through witnessing a vision of the future, followed by an explanation of specific uses of AI, it becomes natural to begin to reflect upon how these technologies can impact the reader's life, both professional and personal. With Virginia 811 entering its third year and second PHMSA grant to develop AI with machine learning capabilities to improve auditing of web tickets, this book was a natural choice to use for professional development.

Over the past few months, the Virginia 811 Executive Team and the QA/QC Supervisor read one to two chapters from AI 2041 and then met over Zoom to discuss each chapter. These discussions helped the team better understand the potential of AI. Through these discussions several ideas developed about how Virginia 811 can find new ways to leverage AI. For example, through AI, some interesting training experiences for DPS could emerge. Using virtual reality, DPS could participate in simulations related to construction sites and learn about heavy machinery and safe digging practices, as well as locating underground utilities. While it's not the type of training to get DPS out into the field to actually work at a construction site, this virtual environment could provide DPS a better understanding of the work stakeholders perform and the challenges they face.

AI is something we all need to better understand and we'll continue to explore how it can impact our businesses and our lives. Through the use of sci-fi and a related analysis, AI 2041 provides a unique and informative tool to help better understand and appreciate this exciting technology

Learn more about this book, by visiting the authors' website:

<https://www.ai2041.com>



# FAST FACTS

CHANNEL	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
PHONE	69,492	28.57%
WTE	104,291	42.88%
SAT	34,976	14.38%
TRE	34,478	14.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>243,237</b>	All Channels YTD 2022

## Total Internet Originated Tickets YTD 2022

# 173,745

(71.43% of all Tickets)

# Recently Adopted Regulations

## Amending 20 VAC 5-309-150 B of the Commission's Rules for Enforcement of the Virginia Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act.

Reminder of the recently adopted regulations amending 20 VAC 5-309-150 B of the Commission's Rules for Enforcement of the Virginia Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act.

The amendments allow for a qualified contractor, in addition to the excavator, to complete the post-excavation video inspection for trenchless excavation across gravity fed sewer mains and combination storm and sanitary sewer system utility lines.

This rule making is effective January 1, 2022.

For questions, please contact William Henry Harrison, IV at 804.371.9228.

Full details of the Order can be found on the SCC's website:

<https://www.scc.virginia.gov/DocketSearch#caseDocs/142080>



# TEAM MEMBERS EARN GIS FUNDAMENTALS CERTIFICATES

## Continuing Studies Program Provides Newest GIS Software & Best Practices



Congratulations to Marcy Carroll, GIS Analyst II, and to Christy Hale and Connesha Waterfield, Senior DPS working in the area of mapping assistance on completing and being awarded a SPCS GIS Program, GIS Fundamentals Certificate from the University of Richmond, School of Professional & Continuing Studies.

This program shared the newest GIS software and the best practices for utilizing it in various fields. This was a study of broad applications in natural and social sciences, humanities, environmental studies, engineering, and management. Project examples included wildlife habitat study, urban and regional planning, infectious disease monitoring, agriculture and forestry, environment quality assessment, emergency management transportation planning, consumer, and competitor analysis and many more. The GIS team attended class for 2.5 hours per week for 3 months with homework and a

final project assignment completed by using a special mapping program called ArcGIS Pro.

The team's take aways were that GIS was intriguing and it evolves each day. It was interesting to learn the various applications in which GIS technology can be applied and utilized. It expanded their knowledge that could be applied within Virginia 811 and also other expansive uses of GIS throughout various industries and applications.

### Christy Hale's Project:

- Construct a Model of a Realistic 3D View of a Scene
- 3D Scene, Texture, Cartography

### Connesha Waterfield's Project:

- Construct a Model to Measure Global Hunger
- Using Arc GIS to show layers of mapping and comparing a population vs. food insecurity

### Marcy Carroll's Project:

- Construct a Model to Connect a Mountain Lion Habitat
- Find suitable corridors to connect dwindling mountain lion populations

# VIRGINIA 811 ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP

## Pipeline Association for Public Awareness (PAPA)

Earlier this year Virginia 811 stepped into a partnership with the Pipeline Association for Public Awareness as a Supporting Partner. Established in 2004 PAPA is a nonprofit organization that provides pipeline safety and emergency preparedness information to residents, businesses, farmers, excavators, emergency responders and public officials. Virginia 811 is joined with CGA, JULIE and South Dakota 811 as one of the first four supporting partners. With their passion to serve and dedication to safety, this partnership takes Virginia 811's educational efforts to a new level.







# HELP THEM GROW.

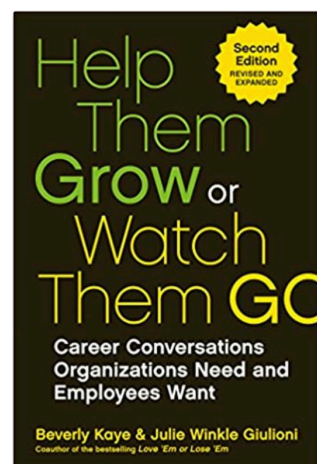
## ...OR WATCH THEM GO.

### Career Conversations Employees Want

Virginia 811 recently strengthened skills among their leadership team by offering team members a basic mentorship course. The course was offered through the Virginia Western Community College School of Career & Corporate Training. Course objectives reflect viewpoints from the book, “**Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go**” by Beverly Kaye and Julie Winkle Giulioni which discusses how to engage team members through conversation.

The leadership and DPS Mentorship teams participated in a virtual classroom setting that imitated the type of coaching session a leader or mentor might have with a team member. Each participant selected an individual to mentor and participants followed step-by-step guidelines to facilitate discussion with mentees. A Persona Worksheet was used to question and track answers about the mentee and this helped the mentor learn more about how to engage their team members. Mentors ask questions to help team members set goals like: Where have you been? What have you done? Where do you want to go? How can I help you achieve your goals?

Changing perspectives on what professional growth looks like and how it’s achieved in today’s work environment are critical for an organization to thrive. The mentorship course taught the value of “growing in place”. Considering that advancement in today’s corporate world looks more like a rock-climbing wall than a standard ladder” it’s essential to learn more about our team members to help them grow both personally and professionally in their current jobs. The training our leaders and mentors received helped them meet that objective. An added benefit of the training was that mentors often learned as much about themselves as the person they mentored.



# The Virginia 811 Scholarship

GIVING BACK IN 2022

Education and lifelong learning are important to Virginia 811. The driving force behind continuous improvement is learning, and without continuous improvement, companies become complacent and stagnant. In the realm of public safety, this is not acceptable. Internally, Virginia 811 is exploring new ways to reinforce our culture of continual learning. From debriefings and reviews of procedures to an emerging job shadowing program, to new professional development offerings, to the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and a certification program, Virginia 811 is putting continued learning at the forefront.

Last year, Virginia 811 launched a new program to give back to stakeholders and to help high school graduates as they enter college or trade schools. The Virginia 811 Scholarship helped two students as they entered the next chapter of their educational lives. Additionally, two more students will be able to take advantage of these scholarships this year!

Beginning in mid-March, Virginia 811 will have more information about the scholarship program on its website and will be sending information to schools across the Commonwealth. This year, the application process has been streamlined.

To apply for the scholarship, applicants must:

- Have at least one parent or legal guardian who works full or part-time at a Virginia 811 Member Utility, works as a Utility Locator locating utilities in Virginia, or is a Professional Excavator who works in Virginia and whose company has successfully set up a Web Ticket Entry Account with Virginia 811;
- Be a Virginia resident and attend an accredited Virginia high school, public or private;
- Be a senior at their respective high school;
- Have a current GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- Be planning to attend either community college, an accredited trade school, or a four-year, accredited college or university by the following fall after graduation;
- Successfully complete the Basic C.A.R.E. Module (Training Only) as a “Homeowner” prior to applying for this scholarship.

Check the Virginia 811 website after March 15. For questions, please reach out to Virginia 811’s Education & Marketing Supervisor, Nikki Turpin at [NTurpin@VA811.com](mailto:NTurpin@VA811.com).





# Looking Back. Moving Forward.

## The Key to Providing Service and Safety for All



Every year in January or February, team members get together to participate in Winter Workshop! The theme of the 2022 Winter Workshop was, Looking Back – Moving Forward. Looking back to the first Winter Workshop we had in 2005 proved to be enlightening. From ticket entry, to our website and to our logo, we got a clear picture of how far we've progressed over the years!

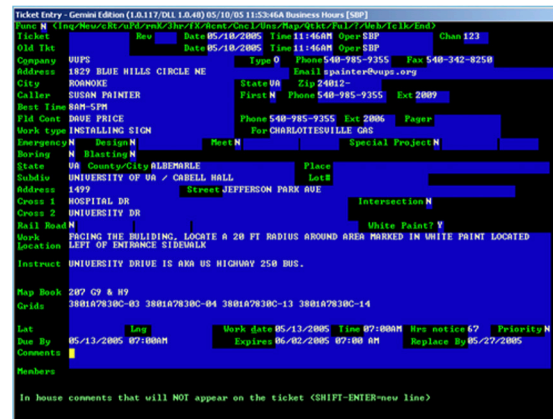


It's interesting to note that 21 of our team members who attended the first Winter Workshop are still with Virginia 811! All began their careers as Damage Prevention Specialist and have either transitioned into other areas of the company or continue to support the Operations Team in various capacities.

**LOOKING BACK...** in 2007, Apple announced and released the first iPhone at the same time that Virginia 811 released Newtin ticket entry. The look

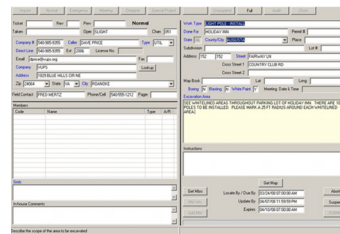


and function of the new ticket entry was the result of a focus group comprised of team members from the Operations and IT Departments, as well as members of the Executive team. Together they worked to design a more dynamic ticket entry with advanced mapping



software. During that timeframe, the website got a makeover as well.

**LOOKING BACK...** in 2015, the release of H5 Ticket entry software provided the user full visual access to both the ticket entry and the map without the need to toggle between screens. This application remains in use because of its user-friendly design and easy access to the map. It also allows the user to look at the map, the location, and description of excavation simultaneously which enhances the accuracy of each ticket.



**LOOKING BACK...** in 2019 we celebrated our first Winter Workshop in our brand-new building. The workshop theme centered on "A Taste of Mardi Gras". What folks remember most about that Winter Workshop was the chicken and waffles made in our very own kitchen. Little did we know that the



every one of our team members worked remotely from home, still with a passion to serve, dedication to safety.

**LOOKING BACK...** Winter Workshops have evolved over the past couple of years and though we aren't able to "get together" physically, we still celebrate our successes virtually! Health and mental wellness have always been a priority at Virginia 811 but especially during COVID. This year, to help kick off our celebration, everyone participated in Laughter Yoga. We learned that there is nothing more powerful to open minds and refresh our perspectives than laughing like a child!

**LOOKING BACK...** Our learning partner, Virginia Western Community College, School of Career and Corporate Training, presented a series of topics; Neuroplasticity: Psychological Impact for Personal & Organizational Resilience, Intrinsic Motivation & Self-Determination, Cognition Based Communication and Augmented Reality & Artificial Intelligence. We also explored a TED Talk presented by Virginia Tech's own Scott Geller entitled, "The psychology of self-motivation" which taught us how to explore ourselves "Beyond Boundaries".

**MOVING FORWARD...** in 2022 team member

engagement is a top priority. We introduced ways we plan to ensure that team members have an opportunity to meet with and enjoy building relationships with other team members during Zoom meetings held at lunchtimes so that team members can mingle as they did when we gathered in the breakroom. We will also explore topics of interest as we gather around the virtual water cooler for "Water-cooler Wednesdays"! The new Job Shadowing program will introduce team members to other areas or positions within Virginia 811 and be expanded to other organizations as an opportunity to learn from others. During Winter Workshop, team members were encouraged to use the Individual Development Plan (IDP) available in Policy Tech to share their professional development goals, express their interests, and share their goals and aspirations.

**MOVING FORWARD...** The Marketing Team is celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Virginia 811 Academy and shared their marketing efforts for 2022 during this workshop. They also took the opportunity to ask our DPS team members for their input regarding customer feedback.

**MOVING FORWARD...** One of the most important aspects of Winter Workshop was sharing the results from the Best Places to Work Survey which included an update on Virginia 811's financial wellness. With the use of an art technique called "pointillism", Scott Crawford helped us understand the need to look at the big picture when analyzing results in order to gain a clearer understanding of what lies ahead.





Steve Light joined the Virginia 811 team in March of 2002. For most of his almost 20-year tenure with the team, Steve wore numerous hats, from Public Awareness to Operations. In the early years, Steve worked strictly in Public Awareness for the Notification Center. He built up a Public Awareness department, serving stakeholders across Virginia, and ultimately helped develop a Stakeholder Engagement Department as he provided key input and insight while Virginia 811 developed a Marketing team. Steve's presence was felt in almost all damage prevention efforts across the state while he served on the SCC Advisory Committee, facilitated town hall meetings, conducted Virginia 811 Membership meetings, served on state and national committees, and the list goes on.

It's bittersweet to announce that Steve Light is leaving the Virginia 811 team to pursue a wonderful opportunity with the Common Ground Alliance (CGA). To say that Steve will be missed is an understatement. The entire team, many of whom have worked with Steve throughout almost his entire tenure, will truly miss him. His departure sends a ripple throughout the damage prevention stakeholder team across Virginia. We will all miss his keen knowledge base and his calm demeanor which he displayed one-on-one with Members or standing in front of an audience of stakeholders sharing updates on damage prevention efforts and Virginia 811 data.

With Steve moving more onto the national stage in his position with CGA, I know that his strengths will be felt nationally, and even beyond. I know Steve will embrace this wonderful opportunity and help CGA as they advance many new projects. His work at CGA will ultimately help others beyond the boundaries of Virginia in their damage prevention efforts, including all of us in Virginia. In this way, Steve will still be considered part of the Virginia 811 team, even as he begins work with a new team.

The words of Briscoe Darling say it best: "You know something, [Steve], that haircut of yours may be city style, but your heart is shaped like a bowl." I know your heart is full of a passion for damage prevention, and I am happy for you as that bowl will now feed a much larger group of stakeholders. We will miss you, Steve.

Wishing you all the best  
and thank you for your service to Virginia 811,

- B. Scott Crawford  
President & CEO | Virginia 811

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

## Team Members Celebrating Their Service to Virginia 811 This Quarter

<b>Rick Marchenko</b> 2/2/2002   20 Years of Service	<b>Stephanie Ferguson</b> 2/21/2006   16 Years of Service	<b>Connesha Waterfield</b> 2/25/2013   9 Years of Service
<b>Jackie Stern</b> 2/11/2002   20 Years of Service	<b>Melissa Ray</b> 2/21/2006   16 Years of Service	<b>Betty Pagans</b> 1/6/2014   8 Years of Service
<b>Rob Hogan</b> 2/18/2002   20 Years of Service	<b>Peggy Goens</b> 1/29/2007   15 Years of Service	<b>Caitlyn Goodchild</b> 1/22/2018   4 Years of Service
<b>Steve Duncan</b> 3/11/2002   20 Years of Service	<b>Janie Shepard</b> 1/29/2007   15 Years of Service	<b>Deena Jordan</b> 1/22/2018   4 Years of Service
<b>Cathy Waldron</b> 3/18/2002   20 Years of Service	<b>Lauren Berrios</b> 2/12/2007   15 Years of Service	<b>Tiffany Uhl</b> 3/22/2018   4 Years of Service
<b>Mike Hosey</b> 3/17/2003   19 Years of Service	<b>Patty Hawkins</b> 2/4/2008   14 Years of Service	<b>Gail Biggs</b> 2/4/2019   3 Years of Service
<b>Cathy Semones</b> 3/17/2003   19 Years of Service	<b>Kim Hermanson</b> 2/4/2008   14 Years of Service	<b>Tracy Kingery</b> 2/4/2019   3 Years of Service
<b>Amy Wright</b> 3/17/2003   19 Years of Service	<b>Kenny Spade</b> 2/4/2008   14 Years of Service	<b>Julia Adkins</b> 3/4/2019   3 Years of Service
<b>Kai Marxen</b> 2/16/2004   18 Years of Service	<b>Kerry Bradley</b> 1/31/2011   11 Years of Service	<b>Taylor Dickerson</b> 3/4/2019   3 Years of Service
<b>Stacey Clark</b> 1/18/2005   17 Years of Service	<b>Robyn Divers</b> 2/14/2011   11 Years of Service	
<b>Julie Rector</b> 1/30/2006   16 Years of Service	<b>Anna Holtz</b> 2/25/2013   9 Years of Service	

Together they bring a combined **399** years of experience to the Virginia 811 team!

# GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations To The Recipients Of The Golden Shovel Award for the 2021 Year & 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021!

## MARTY MITCHEM

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD  
FOR THE 2021 YEAR

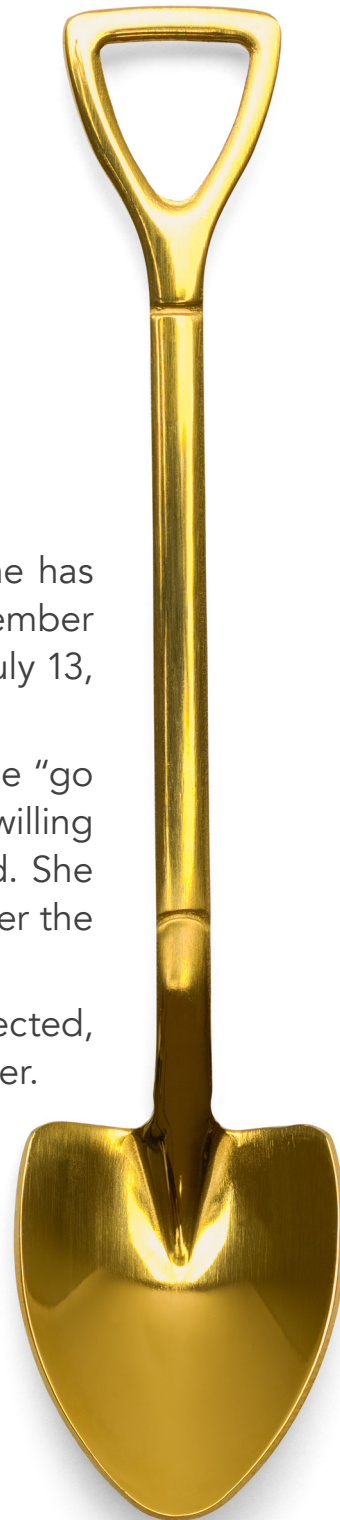


Marty Mitchem has an abundant knowledge in various areas within Virginia 811. She has served as a team member as a Web Ticketing Coordinator, the Help Desk and Member Services. She is one of our charter team members who started with Virginia 811 on July 13, 2002.

Marty has an excellent work ethic, is very self-motivated and can be counted on as the “go to person” for any questions her team members may need answered. She is always willing to support our external and internal customers with any assistance they might need. She currently works with Cathy Waldron on projects for Member Services, which allows her the opportunity to train and share her knowledge with many team members.

She has been willing to jump in on projects no matter the challenge. Always self-directed, she makes sure the project is completed in a timely, accurate, and professional manner.

“ Marty jumps in on projects no matter the challenge. When she begins a project, she sticks with it until completion, and it’s always done accurately. ”



## NIKKI TURPIN

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD  
4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER 2021 RECIPIENT

Nikki Turpin has been with Virginia 811 since July 16, 2018. She has been promoted to the position of Education and Marketing Supervisor. She will be working in this role with the Regional Education & Digital Marketing Liaison, the Regional Education & Multimedia Liaison, and the Member Services Liaison. Nikki is known for her energy and her “can do attitude” with a Passion to Serve and a Dedication to Safety. Her enthusiasm is contagious at membership meetings and she’s always ready with a quick smile and words of encouragement!

“ Nikki receives compliments at every meeting where she presents for her enthusiasm, as well as the job she did with sharing information. The energy level she brings to the table is unbelievable and easily recognized and appreciated by the stakeholders. ”



