

# The Virginia 811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



Dig With **CARE**

VIRGINIA 811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2022



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## ON THE COVER:

“Construction Workers Observing Underground Utility Lines Exposed at Construction Site”

Oil painting in the style of Thomas Hart Benton as generated by OpenAI’s machine learning model Dall-E



## LETTER FROM THE CEO

### B. Scott Crawford

As we hopefully move from epidemic to endemic in regard to COVID, and hopefully keep Monkeypox and Polio (seriously?) at bay, we may be seeing the end of 2022 and early 2023 as a truly new phase of operations. There is no denying that, overall, our social-economic systems demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity. Of course, this has meant that we will never return to pre-pandemic norms but rather live within an evolved system, both within a business and societal context. For Virginia 811, unprecedented remote work, with almost 100% of the team working from home; new hiring practices, now extending across the state, and even across state borders; a Portable Generator Team working from home with generators allowing continued operational functionality in the event of power outages; a new call switch that is cloud based; a new backup phone system in place in the event of a disruption in the primary call switch; and an unprecedented use of artificial intelligence in the 811 industry tied to ticket QA/QC have all reflected the notification center’s evolution and commitment to continuous improvement. The pandemic has helped make us stronger in notable ways.

However, the pandemic has also reflected challenges to the overall 811 industry. With the pandemic coinciding with the Infrastructure Bill, supply chain issues, and inflation, there has been some level of pressure on the 811 process. In reaction to this pressure, Taskforce 2022 has been formed, consisting of members from the State Corporation Commission (SCC), the SCC Advisory Committee, and

a host of stakeholders, to explore how the Damage Prevention Act can be modified through the General Assembly in order to allow for continuous improvement in damage prevention efforts and to facilitate the most efficient way to support the extension of broadband across the “last mile” throughout the Commonwealth. These changes to the Law are inching toward language that will be shared with the wider stakeholder community in the hope that it will reach the General Assembly in the fall. These changes will in turn allow prevention to evolve and also reflect a spirit of continuous improvement.

We are also incredibly pleased to introduce to you in this issue Brian Morehouse. Brian will be supervising Virginia 811’s public awareness initiatives across the state. He is a strong addition to the team, and he will be providing new energy to our already strong public awareness initiatives.

As always, be sure to read about Virginia 811’s Second Quarter, 2022, Golden Shovel Award winner. And, if you feel at times overwhelmed with work, be sure to check out this edition’s book review! This book may be the answer to your questions about how to better manage your workload.

This is truly an exciting era in damage prevention as we, the collective stakeholder team, continue to work together to identify areas for improvement.

- B. Scott Crawford  
President & CEO  
Virginia 811

# Professional Growth Opportunities in a Virtual World

## Virginia 811's Modern Approach to Fostering a Culture of Learning

Virginia 811's commitment to foster a continuous learning culture is grounded on the precept of encouraging team members to individually seek out professional growth opportunities as well as providing opportunities for team members to participate in various learning venues. Each of our team members is encouraged to complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) outlining their own professional goals and aspirations, talents, strengths, and development opportunities that includes an action plan to help them realize their goals. The IDP also provides our supervisors and managers with a means to engage their team members overall to help identify potential talent for current and future business needs.



A group of supervisors are taking a course entitled, "Leading in a Remote Environment" and upon completion will earn certification from Harvard's online courses offered through edX. Our Mentors are taking courses through edX.org and Mooc.org such as "Coaching Skills for Learning-Centered Conversations" and "Leading With Effective Communication".

In August, one of our Senior Damage Prevention Specialist was promoted to an Operations

Supervisor and two of our DPS were promoted to Senior Damage Prevention Specialist in the role of Mentor. As part of their training, they will be reading and discussing the book, *Help Them Grow or Watch them Go* which was first introduced in February through one of our learning partners, Virginia Western Community College.

Our Head of Talent will launch Virginia 811's Job Shadowing program by shadowing our HR Specialist while processing payroll. This effort

not only teaches a new skill but helps to avoid a single point of failure should our HR Specialist be unavailable to process payroll.

A new position, Education & Marketing Supervisor was added to the Virginia 811 team in August. The supervisor is currently participating in training on the Law, ticket entry and quality assurance. Additional courses have been provided such as "Leadership at a Distance: Managing Your Remote Team" and "The Supervisor's Guide

to Giving Directions, Feedback and Criticism".

August and September will also be another exciting time for Virginia 811 as we transition to the Five 9 Virtual Contact Center. Our Operations Team, DPS, Senior DPS, Supervisors, and Manager will be learning how to use the new software to answer calls, manage schedules and performance, and evaluate quality.

# FAST FACTS

CHANNEL	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
PHONE	305,812	28.54%
WTE	434,159	40.52%
SAT	182,148	17.00%
TRE	149,311	13.94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,071,430</b>	

Total Internet Originated Tickets YTD 2022

# 765,618

(71.5% of all tickets)



# GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD WINNER

## Kerry Bradley

### GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD SECOND QUARTER



Congratulations Kerry Bradley! Having been at Virginia 811 since January 31, 2011, Kerry has worked as a DPS and as a Senior DPS Member Services Assistance Specialist. And on August 1, 2022 she was promoted to an Operations Supervisor.

Kerry works to improve team member engagement by openly chatting with her team members, having a volunteer captain representative for each team, and by creating weekly Thursday/Friday trivia contests. She is always posting fun tips, jokes or sharing useful knowledge while encouraging her team members.

Kerry graciously volunteered in both 1st and 2nd Quarters to assist with training Operations team members on Office@Hand. Her leadership and proactive approach ensured that all those working the President's Day holiday were able to assist stakeholders in a timely manner. Her daily chats have fostered interaction among fellow team members and contributed to employee engagement and inclusion amongst her team which is especially welcome in today's remote work environment.

She is always willing to work extra hours to support business needs, help a fellow team member, and even came in early in April and May to assist with New Hire Training. She recognized that her role as a Senior DPS was multi-faceted and was never afraid to step in where needed. These are just a few of the reasons Kerry was promoted to an Operations Supervisor during August.

Kerry truly embodies a Passion to Serve, Dedication to Safety and in honor of her work achievements we are proud to award her the Golden Shovel Award – Second Quarter.

“ Kerry is an amazing team member. She never fails to jump in to assist our team, share her knowledge, and offer encouragement to everyone she encounters. ”

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

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



**Marty Mitchem**  
7/13/2002 | 20 Years of Service

**Garry Finley**  
9/29/2004 | 18 Years of Service

**Amanda Cottrell**  
8/11/2017 | 5 Years of Service

**Nikki Turpin**  
7/16/2018 | 4 Years of Service

**Kim Asbury**  
7/30/2018 | 4 Years of Service

**Jerry Altice**  
7/29/2019 | 3 Years of Service

**Alixandra Dean**  
7/29/2019 | 3 Years of Service

**Chuck Emerson**  
7/29/2019 | 3 Years of Service

**Fernando Mendez**  
9/2/2020 | 2 Years of Service

**Kimberly Swope**  
9/8/2020 | 2 Years of Service

**Shana Linthicum**  
7/14/2021 | 1 Year of Service

Together they bring a combined **65** years of experience to the Virginia 811 team!

# Bringing Order to the Hyperactive Hive Mind

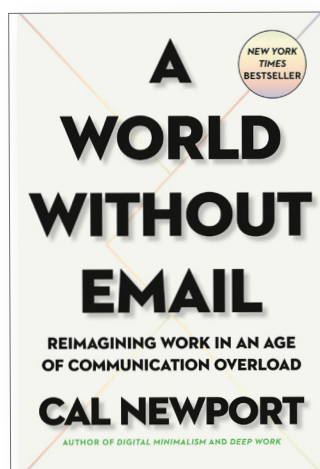
## Review of *A World Without Email*: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload

- B. Scott Crawford

In the movie *Glory*, there is a scene where a recruit in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment calmly levels his rifle, takes aim, and easily shoots a bottle at a notable distance. His comrades in arms cheer. At this point, Matthew Broderick, playing Robert Gould Shaw, the officer who commanded the regiment, approaches the recruit, congratulating him on his marksmanship. He asks the recruit to repeat the process, which the recruit begins to do. As he begins to load his muzzle loaded rifle, Broderick begins to bark orders: "faster!" The recruit awkwardly and nervously tries to speed the cumbersome process, only to be told in an ever-increasing voice: "Faster!" As he begins to take aim, Broderick puts a pistol, aimed upward, next to the recruit's ear and fires into the air, startling the recruit. Through yelling orders and firing the pistol the now shaken recruit fires and misses the target. With no interruptions, the recruit easily completes a task; when interruptions and distractions come about, the recruit fails miserably to reach the objective.

This scene reflects a harsh reality in business today: the "noise," in the form of emails, and other digital channels, constantly disrupts workflow. As we attempt to "take aim" and complete tasks tied to our workflows, like the recruit, digital communication channels are like an officer barking orders and firing a pistol next to our ear! This environment begins to focus on and around an ongoing, and seemingly never ending, conversation that is asynchronous, unstructured, and unscheduled. The "conversation," fueled by the channels tied to the Digital Revolution, force us to balance reactionary actions with our expected proactive behaviors that contribute to production. Many times, like the recruit in *Glory*, we either miss the mark or advance tasks positively but accompanied with the stress and anxiety the recruit clearly exhibits with an officer constantly distracting him.

Cal Newport, associate professor of computer science, Georgetown University, describes this work environment as a "Hyperactive Hive Mind." This environment has materialized in the shadow of the Digital Revolution that began to unfold in the 1980s and was in place by the mid-1990s. To Newport, this environment is counterproductive to many of the needed areas that allow for a more stress free, and even productive, work environment to thrive. His latest book, *A World Without Email*, provides both an engaging overview of how work has changed over the past 30 years and what businesses need to examine to find a proper balance between communication overload and productivity.



I will be honest, this book has impacted me strongly in regard to how Virginia 811 might find some improvement in overall workflow, efficiencies, and supporting team members as they try to free themselves from some of the stress that has accompanied the Digital Revolution. While the first part of the book, which examines more the history of email and the Digital Revolution, as well as how digital communication somewhat naturally positioned itself as a hegemonic force in business and business workflows, is interesting and somewhat thought provoking, the second part provides practical advice as to how businesses can re-define workflows to adapt to this hyperactive business environment.

“ It’s important to remember that there’s nothing fundamental about email as a tool that demands that we use it constantly. ”

CAL NEWPORT,  
*A WORLD WITHOUT EMAIL*

Newport identifies four principles businesses need to explore to combat the Hyperactive Hive Mind. They include the Attention Capital Principle, Process Principle, Protocol Principle, and Specialization Principle. Each principle is the focus of a chapter that includes a case study of a business that has proven adept at integrating the principle into its work environment. These case studies help the reader better understand, in a real-world situation, how the principle can

be integrated into a corporate workflow. For example, the chapter on the Attention Capital Principle examines how Devesh, an entrepreneur, uses the online platform [www.Trello.com](http://www.Trello.com) to manage workflows in order to remove the distractions of communication overload. This is a system definitely worth examining, especially as the basic platform is free. The Virginia 811 Executive Team has begun to explore how to use Trello and is finding some success.

If you feel that you, and your team, are overextended, constantly being pulled from projects to respond to a host of digital communication channels, and not finding the level of productivity you wish your team could reach, *A World Without Email* is a book you will want to examine. The four principles Newport identifies and examines will definitely present some solid and insightful strategies to help your team and organization find workflows that will suffer less from extraneous "noise" and will lead to higher levels of productivity.

“ Constant communication is not something that gets in the way of real work; it has instead become totally intertwined in how this work actually gets done. ”

CAL NEWPORT,  
*A WORLD WITHOUT EMAIL*





# Upcoming Virginia Pipeline Awareness Meetings



## Coordinated Response & Excavator Exercise Pipeline Safety Program (CoRE-EX)

CoRE-EX is a combination program where excavators learn pipeline safety alongside first responders. CoRE-EX's objective is bringing together pipeline operators, first responders, and excavators to pre-plan for pipeline emergency response. Each meeting will demonstrate a local pipeline incident scenario to exchange resources and capabilities of all included. The CoRE-EX program engages all through interaction with pipeline representatives and interaction with the audience.

<b>WISE, VA</b> September 13, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>ABINGDON, VA</b> September 14, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>LEBANON, VA</b> September 15, 2022 5:30 PM
<b>BLACKSBURG, VA</b> September 19, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>ROANOKE, VA</b> September 20, 2022 11:00 AM	<b>MARTINSVILLE, VA</b> September 21, 2022 5:30 PM
<b>SOUTH BOSTON, VA</b> September 22, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>LYNCHBURG, VA</b> September 26, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>FORK UNION, VA</b> September 27, 2022 5:30 PM
<b>RUCKERSVILLE, VA</b> September 28, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>HARRISONBURG, VA</b> September 29, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>FRONT ROYAL, VA</b> October 4, 2022 5:30 PM
<b>MANASSAS, VA</b> October 5, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>CULPEPER, VA</b> October 6, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>FREDERICKSBURG, VA</b> October 11, 2022 5:30 PM
<b>COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VA</b> October 13, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>EMPORIA, VA</b> October 18, 2022 5:30 PM	<b>SMITHFIELD, VA</b> October 19, 2022 5:30 PM
<b>VIRGINIA BEACH, VA</b> October 20, 2022 11:00 AM	<b>VIRGINIA BEACH, VA</b> October 20, 2022 5:30 PM	

To register for a CoRE-EX meeting in your area, go to [VA811.com/events/](http://VA811.com/events/)

# VIRGINIA 811 WELCOMES



## Brian Morehouse Education and Marketing Supervisor

Brian Morehouse started at Virginia 811 on August 1<sup>st</sup> as the Education and Marketing Supervisor. In his new position, Brian will focus on creating more engagement opportunities and building strong community involvement throughout the state.

"We're so excited to have Brian on our team!" commented Scott Crawford, President & CEO of Virginia 811. "His knowledge of our industry and experience locating underground utilities and liaison work for an 811 center, make him a perfect fit for Virginia 811. He will be instrumental in overseeing a key part of Virginia 811's mission to improve our public awareness, education, and marketing areas."

Brian was raised in the eastern part of Virginia, living in Newport News and Gloucester, Virginia before making the move down to North Carolina. His career began at Newport News Shipbuilding, but he wanted to get into the utility business and was hired by Virginia Power in the early 90's. After starting off in their construction department, Brian moved into Electrical Design and finished the Dominion Energy Electrical Design program in 2000. In 2007 he transferred to the Electrical Co-op world in North Carolina by joining EnergyUnited in their design department. After gaining more experience, he began overseeing the fiber installation for that organization.

After more than 25 years in the utility business, Brian worked with AECOM with the contract with VDOT at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and Monitor-Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel.

In 2018, he joined North Carolina 811 as an Education Liaison in the western region of NC. With experience in the utility business, Brian hit the ground running and soon began overseeing their sports marketing efforts along with developing innovative educational and marketing programs.

Brian is a graduate of both Rappahannock Community College and the Dominion Energy Project Designer Training Program. He is also actively involved in the racing industry with the NASCAR Touring Series where he has served as a Field Investigator/ Safety Inspector for the past 16 seasons. He is married to Dr. Audra Cave Morehouse and has two children attending college in North Carolina.

We are excited to have Brian join our team and are looking forward to the wealth of knowledge he will bring to Virginia 811. Welcome aboard Brian!



# MEET BRIAN







# Millionth Ticket

## Virginia 811 Hits Major Milestone for 2022

Each year, Virginia 811 awaits a major millionth ticket milestone for the year.

And this year, it was Tina Owens of Crigger Contracting, Inc. in Mannasas, Virginia who entered 2022's millionth ticket using Ticket Revision Express (TRE). But the odds were stacked in Tina's favor given the large volume of tickets she submits weekly for her company's many residential and commercial excavation projects.

To celebrate the occasion, Fernando Mendez (Virginia 811 Regional Marketing Liaison for Northern Virginia) delivered a festive lunch to the office staff at Crigger Contracting, along with some special Virginia 811 swag. If you need to update, cancel, or remark your locate requests, remember to use the TRE online option. It's quick and easy, and in most cases takes less than 30 seconds to process. And if you have as many tickets per week as Tina does, the time savings really adds up. Just ask her!

### TRE CAN BE USED WHEN:

#### UPDATING



When your excavation work extends past the "Expires Date" on the original ticket but your original ticket work remains the same.

#### CANCELLATIONS



When you're no longer excavating your project in a timely manner or you don't need the original ticket anymore.

#### RE-MARK REQUESTS



When markings on the ground are illegible due to weather or construction activity but the scope and nature of the work remains the same.

For questions about TRE or about other Virginia 811 online ticket options, contact Brian Morehouse at [BMorehouse@VA811.com](mailto:BMorehouse@VA811.com) or 336.482.6890.



# Virginia 811 Outreach

## TO SPANISH-SPEAKING STAKEHOLDERS

Important safe digging messaging should be easily accessible to everyone who works near underground utility lines, regardless of the language they speak.

According to 2019 census data, roughly 212,000 people living in Virginia reported that they either do not speak English or speak English 'not well'. Spanish speakers make up a large portion (61%) of the limited English proficiency (LEP) population.

This means that without the proper training, Spanish-speaking workers for the many construction and excavation companies across Virginia may have limited access to important safe digging practice information.

Virginia 811 recognizes the urgency and is proactively addressing the need to provide additional Spanish language access for Damage Prevention training across the Commonwealth.

Fernando Mendez, Regional Marketing Liaison, is leading Virginia 811's efforts to train Spanish-speaking stakeholders about the importance of damage prevention. During the last quarter he worked with such companies as Dominguez Services LLC, Glo Fiber, American Water, and the City of Alexandria to train workers in both the Dig with CARE Keep Virginia Safe Damage Prevention Program and to explain the various resources developed by Virginia stakeholders (including the State Corporation Commission) to help educate and protect Spanish-speaking workers.

If you would like more information on conducting Spanish-language Virginia 811 training, please contact Fernando Mendez at [FMendez@VA811.com](mailto:FMendez@VA811.com) or 202.336.4867.



## PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TRAINING + COMMUNITY EVENTS THIS QUARTER

- Summer Solstice Festival in Blacksburg
- Viva Vienna in Vienna
- City of Virginia Beach Public Works Employee Appreciation Day
- Gaff-n-Go Lineworkers Rodeo
- 2022 Broadband Together Conference in Richmond
- Rappahannock Electric Cooperative Get Connected Event
- SCC Law Training with Carl Dale and Tracey Lamb of the SCC
- Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA)
- CGA Summer Summit
- Salem Red Sox – Dead & Company CAVA Fundraiser Game

- |                        |  |                      |
|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| MetroNet               | Branscome                                      | William & Mary       |
| Blacksburg VPI         | Garney Construction                            | Stafford County      |
| Seiontic Broadband     | City of Richmond                               | City of Newport News |
| Dominguez Services LLC | Mastec   | Inframark            |
| City of Fairfax        | Kinex Telecom                                  | Prince George County |
| American Water         | City of Waynesboro                             | Shentel              |
| Charles City County    | Buckingham County & Water                      |                      |
|                        | GR Excavating & Utilities Harbor Dredge & Dock |                      |

# 1432

 Individuals Trained YTD





# Meet DALL-E

With a clever nod to the the surrealist painter, this powerful AI blends language and images into original artworks on command. And the results are stunning!

- B. Scott Crawford

DALL-E is a new use of artificial intelligence in beta format through OpenAI, but it is only available to individuals willing

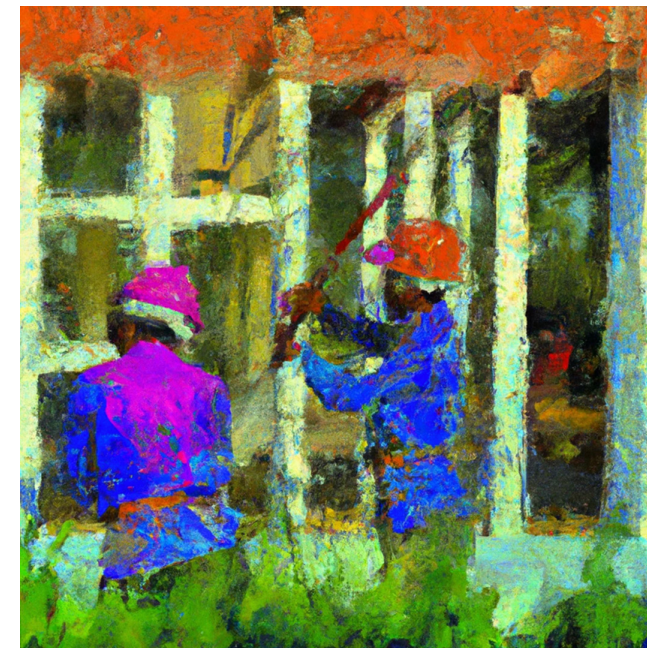
to await access by signing up on a waiting list (see <https://openai.com/dall-e-2/>). Once accepted and sent an invitation, the recipient can start using DALL-E after completing a fairly easy registration process. Upon completion, the new user can begin to experiment with this engaging algorithm. It is at this point the fun begins and the user can explore the limits of the algorithm! Ultimately, the user, working with DALL-E, is able to create an image. It is through this creative and generative process that a work of art is created.

The DALL-E Artificial Intelligence model is activated as the user enters text of what image he or she wishes the model to generate. However, in addition to this description, the user can enter the artistic medium (e.g., oil painting, digital art, pen and ink, etc.) and even a particular artist's style (e.g., in the style of Picasso, in the style of Michelangelo). The functionality of DALL-E is impressive when reflecting on all of the data the model processes in order to produce an image out of text. The model must attempt to align nouns and adjectives in a coherent and accurate manner, as well as identify depictions based on subjective words, and then, if instructed to do so, capture a particular medium and/or artistic style. Within seconds of the user submitting the text, DALL-E is able to generate what is many times an impressive work of art! And, at the same time, there are occasions when some very strange interpretations of the text appear on the digital canvas.

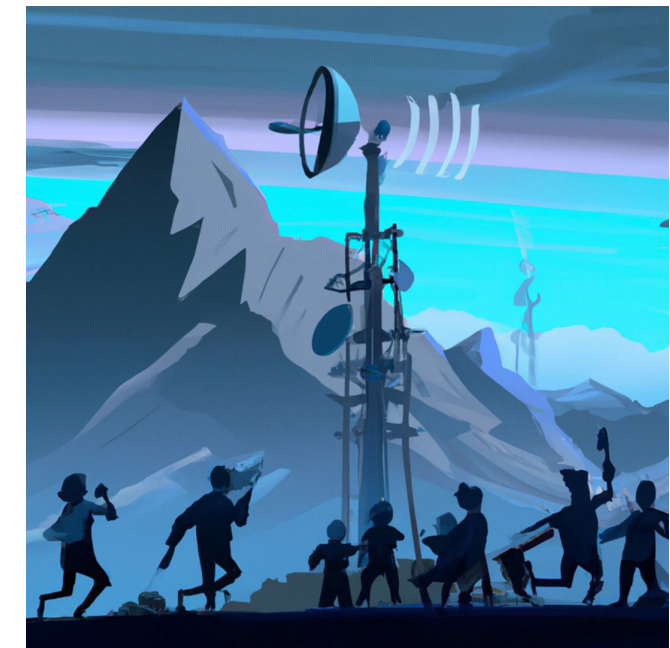
I had the pleasure of gaining access to DALL-E and immediately began to enter a host of descriptions and information to see what the model could accomplish. I was impressed with many of the images it generated. The following are some images in various mediums, with some tied to the style of specific artists, to demonstrate how DALL-E created images based on text related to our industry. The text entered to inspire DALL-E is included below each image.



**"Passion to Serve, Dedication to Safety"**  
Oil Painting - Style of Norman Rockwell



**"Construction Workers Building a House"**  
Impressionist Painting - Style of Monet



**"Broadband Network Connecting People Across a Vast Landscape"** - Digital Art



**"Construction Site"**  
Painting - Style of Salvador Dali



**"Locator Dressed as a Knight Marking Underground Utilities"** - Medieval style tapestry



**"Locator Chased by Dog While Locating Underground Utilities"** - Oil Pastel

Banner Image: "Vibrant portrait painting of Salvador Dalí with a robotic half face." Credit: OpenAI



