

The Virginia 811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



VIRGINIA 811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2023

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

B. Scott Crawford

As we reach the halfway mark of 2023, we have witnessed yet another busy year for our industry. Fiber installation continues as fiber install work type tickets are notably on an upward swing. Just looking at the period between 2021 and year to date 2023, tickets with “fiber install” as the work type have gone from just over 1% of all tickets to nearly 4% of all tickets. Just the first quarter of 2023 alone witnessed the fiber install work type reach 72% of the total fiber install tickets for all of 2021 and 51% of that work type for all of 2022!

Of course, fiber is not the only thing gaining attention in our industry in Virginia. Taskforce 2022, consisting of stakeholders from across Virginia, and a few even outside of Virginia, successfully navigated several changes to the Damage Prevention Act through the General Assembly. With the Governor’s signature, these changes will become law on July 1, 2023. Be sure to check out the information in this issue related to these changes! Also – check out the article related to another important change that will soon be occurring. On July 1, there will be a .05 cent ticket price increase, only the second increase in over 20 years.

Virginia 811 is excited to announce that it can now process member payments for notifications through credit card transactions! In an attempt to bring convenience to its members, Virginia 811 has created a page on its website where members can more easily process payments. Learn more about this exciting option as Virginia 811’s Controller, Tiffany Uhl, explains this process in the following pages.

One of the more interesting developments this year has been the improvement of Code 60. Beginning this year, Code 60 became the first and only Positive Response code that now involves actual interaction between excavator and locator. In an attempt to better document the agreement of an alternate marking schedule, Code 60s can now be accepted or declined by excavators. To improve this process, Virginia 811 has invested in a soon to be released mobile application, the Enhanced Response Management Application, or ERMA. ERMA is the first truly mobile application Virginia

811 has developed. This application will be available soon, at no cost, and will help excavators better manage ticket responses, specifically Code 60s.

While there is a lot of great information in this issue, two articles deserve some attention. First, the second article by our new guest writer, the AI model ChatGPT, provides insight from this AI natural language generator about using virtual reality in damage prevention training. However, for this issue we created a “point/counterpoint” format where ChatGPT argues both sides of the topic, indicating how the use of virtual reality in training is advantageous and has some drawbacks. As will continue to be the case moving forward, the AI model DALL-E provides a unique visual representation to illustrate the topic ChatGPT examines.

The second article to note is our continued inclusion of a book review. This quarter the review is of a work that is quite relevant to the challenges the 811 process is facing with fiber installation across the state. This is what can be described as a “wicked problem;” a problem that is complex, multifaceted, and in actuality cannot be solved but must be managed. The book review examines the guiding thesis of a work exploring this type of problem. It is well worth reviewing and, if possible, taking the added step of purchasing the book and examining this concept in greater detail.

The challenges we face today will result in the benefits our children, and even their children, will appreciate. The work we do truly matters. Together we can navigate any challenges that appear, knowing that our efforts to communicate and work together will create a better tomorrow. I hope you find some nuggets of insight in this issue of The Dirt to produce new, and better, ideas as to how we can help Virginia strengthen its damage prevention efforts and bring essential services to Virginia’s citizens.

- B. Scott Crawford
President & CEO
Virginia 811

2023 CHANGES TO THE DAMAGE PREVENTION ACT

What Is Changing & What You Need to Know Before July 1, 2023

- B. Scott Crawford

Over the course of 2022, a group of stakeholders, working with the Advisory Committee and the SCC team, formed Taskforce 2022. The task force was committed to examining the Damage Prevention Act to modify the Law in order to improve damage prevention in Virginia. After months of work, proposed changes to the legislation were submitted to the General Assembly. Both houses passed this legislation and the Governor has signed these proposals into law. These changes go into effect July 1, 2023.

All stakeholders need to review the complete list of changes, available through the Virginia 811 website under "Resources," however there are several changes directly related to processing locate requests that I will draw to your attention. First, beginning July 1, there will no longer be Special Project tickets. This should not be too impactful as generally the notification center only processes one or two a year, and in some years past, none at all.

Second, beginning July 1, the scope of a ticket will change from 1 mile to 1/3 of a mile. This is fairly significant as linear construction will now need to be broken down into 1/3 of a mile segments. Locate Requests processed before July 1 that exceed 1/3 linear mile will be blocked as of July 1. If a Locate Request exceeding 1/3 linear mile needs to be updated or re-marked as of July 1, the excavator will need to submit new Locate Requests not exceeding 1/3 linear mile. This point makes a great opportunity to reinforce the best practice: break down excavation descriptions into smaller areas.

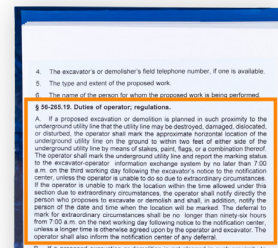
Third, beginning on January 1, 2024, those processing locate requests will be able to schedule these requests up to 12 business days in advance. The default will remain 48 hours beginning 7:00 AM the day after the locate request is processed. However, those processing locate requests will have the option to choose a date between 3 and 12 business days in the future. This will allow excavators to better manage their locate requests as they can plan locate requests for up to 12 days out. Do recognize, though, that the request will still be sent to locators upon being submitted, so lines may be marked before the date you indicate your excavation will begin.

While not related to locate requests directly, there is one other change to the Law that deserves attention. Beginning July 1, those found excavating without a valid locate request can face a fine of up to \$10,000, which is an increase from \$2,500. This is a strong reminder that if you are going to excavate, you need to be sure to submit a locate request!

Please refer to the Virginia 811 website to both review these changes, as well as others, and learn about Town Hall meetings Virginia 811 is hosting for the SCC. These are virtual meetings where you will have the opportunity to learn about these and other changes and ask questions.



Definitions Page 54-56
Professional Excavator's Manual



Page 61
Professional Excavator's Manual

§ 56-265.19*

What is changing:

Allows for scheduling of excavation up to 12 working days out allowing more flexibility regarding the scheduling of work dates of marking. Relative to scheduled excavations, tickets will remain open for 15 working days following the stated date of work.

*Effective January 1, 2024, Virginia 811 will offer the ability of scheduling excavation up to 12 working days out allowing more flexibility regarding the scheduling of work dates for marking. Relative to scheduled excavation, tickets will remain open for 15 working days following the stated date of work.

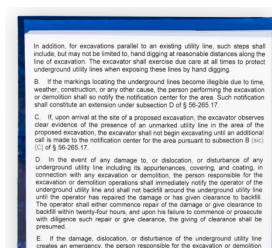
Definitions

What is changing:

"Locate request" substituted for "notice served on notification center" - consistent name.

"Exigent circumstances" - added to recognize circumstances other than acts of God which may inhibit timely line marking.

"Positive response system" - added to Act in order to more formally recognize positive response system.

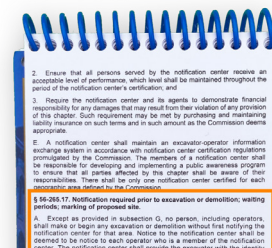


Page 66
Professional Excavator's Manual

§ 56-265.24:1

What is changing:

Penalty for refusing to cease excavation when Commission Staff has made a determination the excavation in progress presents a threat to life, health, and property. Includes education and outreach amongst Commission's authority when enforcing the Act.

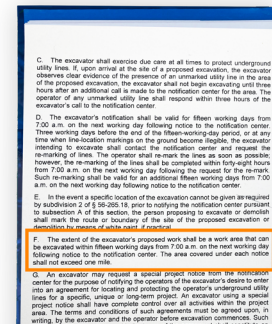


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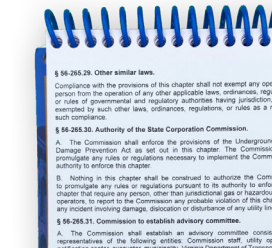
§ 56-265.17 / § 56-265.24

What is changing:

Requires review of positive response system prior to commencing excavation. Creates stricter guidelines for conduct prior to commencing excavation after 48 hours. Removes "Special Project".



Page 59
Professional Excavator's Manual



Page 68
Professional Excavator's Manual

§ 56-265.32

What is changing:

Increases possible fines from \$2,500 to \$5,000, AND up to \$10,000 for failure to contact Virginia 811 and submit a Locate Request prior to excavation (§56-265.17A).

REMINDER: TICKET PRICE INCREASE

Since Virginia 811 opened 20 years ago ticket prices have only been increased one time, from \$1.00 to \$1.05. The price has stayed at that level for over 10 years now, even as the consumer price index has continued to increase.

Virginia 811 is committed to keeping ticket prices as low as possible for its Members. Being a 501(c)(6), not-for-profit, it has a duty to achieve this goal. However, experiencing record high inflation not seen in decades has resulted in rising prices across all industries, including the utilities Virginia 811 serves. Virginia 811 is not immune to this inflationary pressure. Due in large part to rising costs in labor, along with increases in utilities and general supplies, Virginia 811 has realized that it will become necessary to implement a ticket price increase.

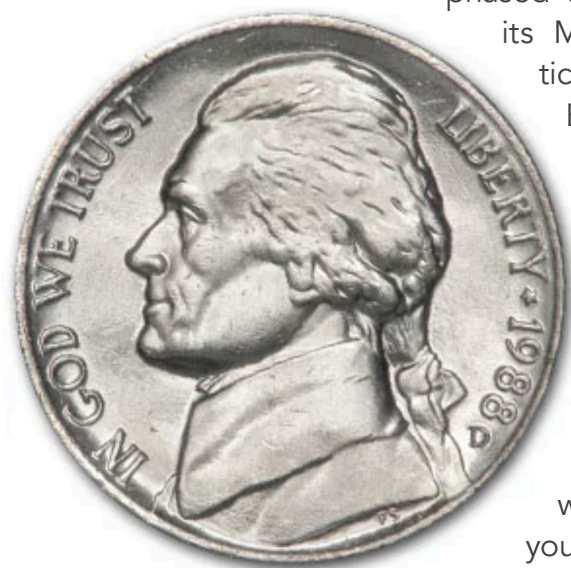
On July 1, 2023, ticket price per transmission will increase by 5 cents and on January 1, 2024, ticket price per transmission will increase another 5 cents. Over the course of 2024, Virginia 811 will evaluate expenses and overall revenue to determine if another 5-cent increase needs to be implemented on January 1, 2025.

While maintaining low ticket prices for Members, Virginia 811 must also ensure it is able to operate in a manner that can continue to attract, and retain, highly skilled team members and invest in technology that can increase overall ticket accuracy and efficiencies, allowing for future cost savings to Members to be realized. This

phased approach to ticket price increases, allows its Members to better prepare for increased ticket costs. During the September 2022

Board meeting, after careful consideration and discussion, the Virginia 811 Board of Directors voted in favor of this phased price increase.

I know that you will continue to be pleased with our services and know how deeply we, as a team, appreciate and value your support. We have come a long way in 20 years, and we look forward to finding new ways to leverage technology to better serve you and protect life and property!



VArif-AI: Virginia 811's Newest Auditing Application

Virginia 811 is excited to announce the official rollout of a new application for Web Ticket Entry (WTE) auditing. This application has become known as VArif-AI, a play on the word "verify." The name emphasizes Virginia's state abbreviation and underscores the application's exclusive use within the state. It also highlights the use of artificial intelligence (AI), which forms the foundation of the system. This project has been in the works for several years, involving contributions from numerous team members and external stakeholders.

Over the past three years, Virginia 811 secured two federal grants from the Department of Transportation's Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). These grants funded the research and development of a machine learning program designed to enhance the quality review of WTE tickets. The project was conducted in partnership with Virginia Tech's Statistical Applications and Innovations Group (SAIG). Through this corporate partnership, the Virginia 811 team collaborated with faculty and graduate students who invested significant time in understanding Virginia 811's data and systems. Ultimately, they designed the machine learning model that powers the new VArif-AI app.

The initial PHMSA grant resulted in the first version of the model, which was functional but lacked a front-end application for implementation. The second PHMSA grant focused on improving model performance and introduced numerous mapping-related features. The enhancements made during the second grant significantly enhanced the model's predictive power.

As the grant reporting period concluded in the fall of 2022, Virginia 811 commenced collaboration with a third-party developer to create a web-based application capable of integrating with the machine learning model. The VArif-AI application functions by listing tickets for human review based on the model's output, which includes an estimated probability of error for each ticket. The model scores 100% of WTE tickets through batch processing every 30 minutes. The application displays all WTE tickets classified as high-risk in terms of ticketing errors. Additionally, it includes approximately 10% of WTE tickets not considered high-risk to address potential false negative predictions.

Although the application has not been in production for a full month, preliminary results are promising. In the past, Virginia 811 identified approximately 600 WTE ticketing errors monthly through random selection auditing, accounting for approximately 3% of monthly WTE audits. These errors could potentially pose safety concerns, making it crucial for Virginia 811 team members to identify and follow up on them. As of now, the machine learning model has scored around 43,000 WTE tickets in roughly three weeks. Out of those tickets, approximately 49% have been reviewed by human auditors, leading to the identification of over 1,100 errors. These results suggest that the VArif-AI application, compared to traditional random selection auditing, could help Virginia 811 and its Quality Assurance & Quality Control team identify more than twice as many ticketing errors. While ongoing monitoring and evaluation of model performance are essential, the preliminary results are exciting.

The successful completion of this multi-year project and the subsequent implementation of the VArif-AI application represent a significant advancement in damage prevention for Virginia and its stakeholders.

The Virginia 811 Service Initiative

The New Gold Standard to Enhance External and Internal Service

Passion to Serve, Dedication to Safety. This simple statement, Virginia 811's motto, carries much weight and reflects the essence of the notification center. The team serving you at Virginia 811 plays a vital role in damage prevention. The team's service ensures utilities are notified when excavation occurs near underground facilities, providing locators the information needed so they can mark those lines. This communication link is the foundation upon which safe excavation rests, followed by excavators reviewing each locate request's Positive Response, ensuring there is no evidence of unmarked utilities, and then practicing safe digging. It is Virginia 811's service that leads to safety; Virginia 811 simply must have a passion to serve in order to reinforce and achieve its dedication to safety.

Virginia 811 has always had notably high scores on service surveys, its commitment to continuous improvement drives Virginia 811 to do more. At the beginning of 2023, Virginia 811 implemented a service initiative designed and formulated over the course of 2022. The leadership team collectively read *The New Gold Standard*, a work exploring the 5 principles of strong service as developed by the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Over

the course of three meetings, with each meeting concentrating on a section of the book, the team identified ways Virginia 811 can enhance external and internal service. To support this, a new Senior Damage Prevention Specialist position was created that focuses on supporting the team and reinforcing strong service. This individual has done a phenomenal job engaging our team and helping improve internal communication!

This is an ongoing, and very fluid, project. The first stage of this initiative has witnessed the formulation of goals and some basic standards. Virginia 811's goals through this initiative include:

1. Increase safety through service
2. Increase stakeholder satisfaction
3. Increase stakeholder engagement
4. Increase retention, resiliency, redundancy
5. Set the 811 notification center standard for service in order to increase damage prevention efforts beyond Virginia!

Such goals are hard to measure, reminding us of William Bruce Cameron's observation that "not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts." However, with goal number one, we would like to observe a decline in 17A violations and even stronger, more accurate tickets.

With goal numbers two and three, we would like to see increased participation in regional meetings and Membership meetings, team member satisfaction, and a rise in service survey levels. Goal four will lower an already low turnover rate and identify additional ways to ensure Virginia 811 is operational at all times. Finally, goal five reflects Virginia 811's desire to influence other 811 centers and impact damage prevention beyond Virginia's borders!

In addition to Virginia 811's motto, the team has now embraced a credo, including four ideals related to service.

CREDO 1
Always act in a manner that is moral, ethical, and legal.

Virginia 811 Service Initiative

CREDO 2
Practice mindful listening, attentiveness, and creative collaboration.
(logo balanced with eros)

Virginia 811 Service Initiative

CREDO 3
Through empathy and understanding, strive to treat others with respect and kindness.

Virginia 811 Service Initiative

CREDO 4
Create a supportive work environment that motivates team members to pursue professional and personal enrichment, making them highly sought-after by other companies while also retaining their dedication to Virginia 811!

Virginia 811 Service Initiative

Virginia 811 Service Initiative Credos

The team at Virginia 811 sincerely hopes those using its service will begin to recognize the benefits of these efforts, finding increasingly exceptional service. The team also hopes its passion to serve and dedication to safety remains clear and evident to everyone, both within Virginia 811 and all of the stakeholders we serve.

Service Plan Goals

- Increase Safety Through Service
- Increase All Stakeholder Satisfaction
- Increase Stakeholder Engagement
- Increase Retention, Resiliency, Redundancy
- Set the 811 Notification Center Standard for Service to Increase Damage Prevention Efforts Beyond Virginia

Virginia 811 Service Initiative

The Training Journey for Spring of 2023

Implementing New Strategies to Combine Efficiency with Gold Star Customer Care Service

Virginia 811 is excited to bring onboard 9 new team members for the spring of 2023. **Molly Avery** started her new position as a Regional Public Awareness Liaison for the Williamsburg area on April 10th. We had 8 new selects hired for the May 15th Damage Prevention Associate (DPA) class. With these new selects coming on board and after reading and discussing, *The New Gold Standard*, by Joseph A. Michelli the management and professional development teams have implemented the concept based on the Ritz-Carlton Hotel model of a 2-day orientation of our company. This introduces the concept of Virginia 811's passion to serve and dedication to safety as well as introducing various departments with an overview of their contributions to Virginia 811's mission. This also gives our new selects an opportunity to meet team members within our company in a virtual environment.



Molly Avery



Nikki Turpin

Nikki Turpin, Professional Development and Education Specialist, guided Molly on her training journey. Molly's position as a Regional Public Awareness Liaison started with the 2-day orientation. She observed our DPS team members interacting and processing locate requests with our customers that prefer to call in their excavation requests. Molly processed SAT 1.0 tickets, reviewed the Web Ticket Entry (WTE) process, including how our mapping systems are integrated. She had the SCC law training on the Damage Prevention Act, including the introduction of Computer Based Training (CBT). She was introduced to the online training of the Virginia 811 Academy. Molly met virtually with the other members of the Public Awareness team for detailed training on stakeholder engagement and training. She was introduced to the various events and training sessions that the Public Awareness department conducts to heighten awareness of damage prevention throughout the state of Virginia. Wishing Molly, the best in her new position, and we are excited to have her join the Virginia 811 team.

Kayla DeHart has moved from her position on the QA/QC team to her new role as a Professional Development and Education Specialist. The position became available when Susan Painter, former Professional Development and Education Specialist, retired in April after 21 years of service. Kayla's first DPA training class started on May 15th. Kayla modified the training to meet the current operational needs for the spring and summer call volume demands. She is thrilled to highlight the incredible journey of the 8 new selects who are on their way to earning the title of Damage Prevention Specialist (DPS). Kyndra, Eric, Victoria, Angela, Cindy, Brooke, Tim, and Nevaeh have shown tremendous dedication and commitment throughout the training, bringing us one step closer to achieving our mission of underground utility damage prevention and ensuring safety throughout Virginia.



Kayla DeHart

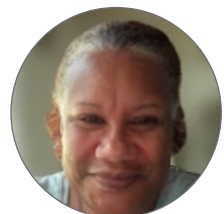
We want to extend our warmest wishes for success to **Kyndra, Eric, Victoria, Angela, Cindy, Brooke, Tim, and Nevaeh** as they continue their journey towards becoming DPSs.



Kyndra Powell



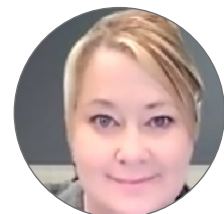
Eric Aldridge



Victoria Brown



Angela Guy



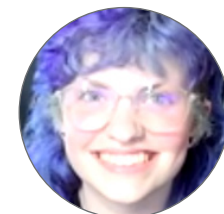
Cindy Lamm



Brooke Thierry



Tim Poole



Nevaeh Bryant

FAST FACTS

CHANNEL	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
PHONE	186,902	30.4%
WTE	238,776	38.9%
SAT	109,540	17.8%
TRE	79,233	12.9%
Total	614,451	

Total Internet Originated Tickets YTD 2023

427,549

(69.6% of all tickets)

NEW VIRGINIA 811 IS NOW ACCEPTING CREDIT CARDS FOR MEMBER INVOICE PAYMENTS

Virginia 811 is now accepting credit cards for member invoice payments! Electronic payments and credit card payments can be submitted by visiting VA811.com, click on **Utilities**, and scroll down to **Member Payments**.

Member Payments

For Members to pay monthly invoices.

[Learn More](#)

Click the **Learn More** button and then click the **Submit Payment Here** button to be connected to the VA811 E-Bill Express payment portal. It is quick and easy to get payments in fast to take advantage of early payment discount terms!!



STATEWIDE LDPC MEETING UPDATE

Virginia's Local Damage Prevention Committee (LDPC) meetings are going strong. Since August 2022, we have jump-started these meetings across the region with great success in Fredericksburg, Winchester, Fairfax, Chesapeake, Blacksburg, Bristol, Christiansburg, Smithfield, Chesterfield, Hopewell, and most recently the Williamsburg, Culpeper, Bluefield, South Hill, and Danville/Lynchburg areas. Plans are currently being worked out to put together meetings in Charlottesville, Roanoke, Emporia, and Wise, as well. A virtual Spanish-speaking LDPC meeting is also being planned so that meetings can be held entirely in Spanish on a regular basis.

Special thanks go out to the great people organizing these meetings. Contributors come from all cross sections of our community; from members, contractors, excavators, and locators alike. And this multi-channel collaboration is making these meetings a success.

LDPC meetings are a time to communicate and network with others. They are an excellent opportunity to review topical subjects, such as law changes and new processes. Guest speakers are a big draw, as well as the presentation of any industry safety information. It is also vital to talk about any issues within your local area in these meetings and introduce any upcoming projects you have in the works. These meetings serve as a type of "planning meeting" where you have the chance to talk about your projects and concerns with the group. The goal is to have meetings within each area quarterly, with meetings expected to last between 1-2 hours.

Currently, five regions are without a chairperson/co-chairpersons (see map for reference). The goal is to have each regional meeting led by a chairperson, or by co-chairpersons to share the responsibility. If you are interested in helping put together a meeting in one of these regions, please reach out to Brian Morehouse, Manager of Public Awareness at Virginia 811.

Virginia 811 will be present at each meeting as a guest to review topical information from our organization, and we also lend our help in sending out regional meeting invitations, reminder notices, and to keep the RSVP tallies. The State Corporation Commission (SCC) would also like to participate, when possible, to give updates and other pertinent commission information.

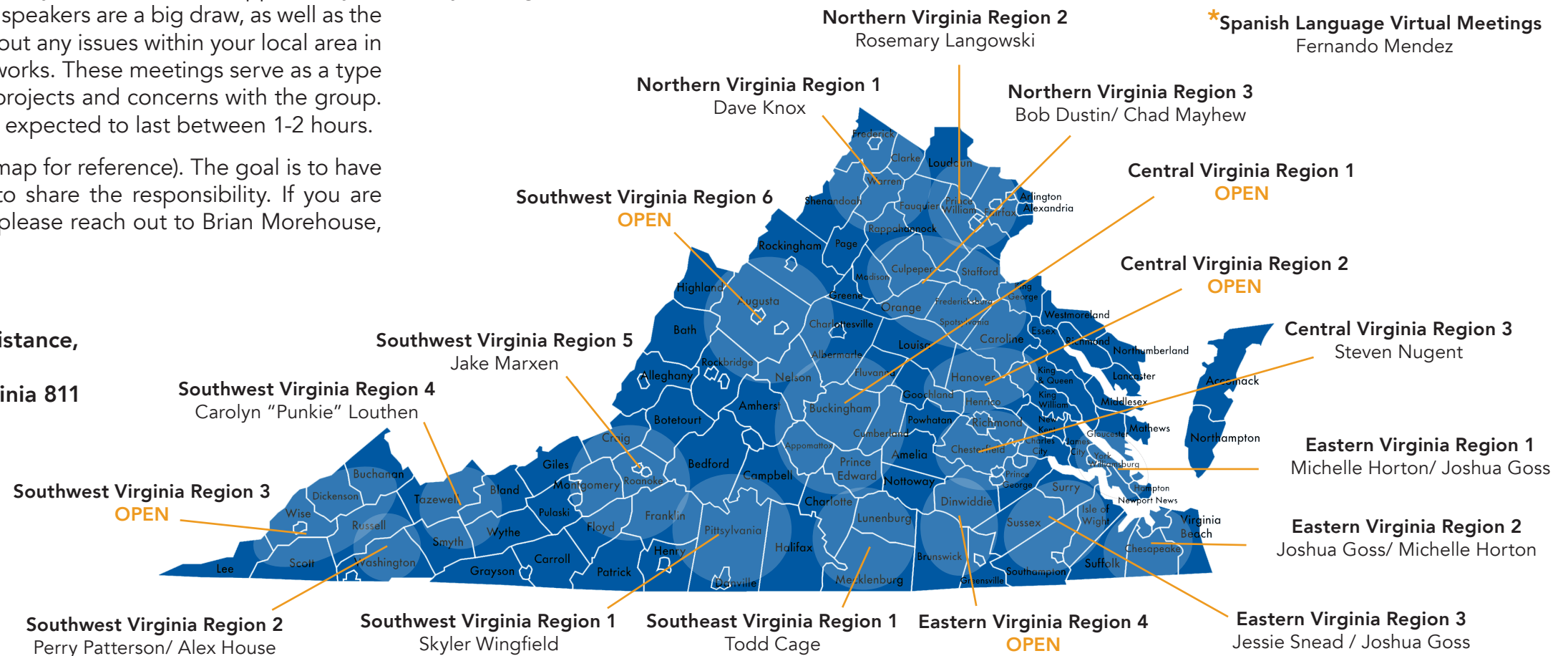
Virginia 811 is currently working to update the VA811.com website to include an **LDPC Meeting** landing page to be located under the **Resources** tab. Once complete, all statewide LDPC meeting information will be housed in this location to include meeting agendas, a regional meeting notification request link, and regional chairperson contact information. Look for this LDPC page in next several weeks. Meeting information will continue to be posted on the VA811 Events calendar as well. You can view it here: <https://va811.com/events/>.

Thank you for your continued support in helping grow these meetings and for sharing this information within your region!



For questions or LDPC meeting assistance, contact **Brian Morehouse**, Manager of Public Awareness | Virginia 811 (336) 482-6890 bmorehouse@va811.com

This map is intended to illustrate the general coverage area of current LDPC meetings by region. Regions are approximate and not intended to represent an exact county coverage or meeting notification area. Its purpose is to show areas where meetings have been established throughout the state and their respective chairperson(s).





2023 DAMAGE PREVENTION CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

- Brian Morehouse

If there was an industry event you wanted to attend in 2023, it was the 2023 Damage Prevention Conference held in Virginia Beach from April 24- 27, 2023. Over 250 people participated in this conference, and the insights and information this conference provided were invaluable.

The last Damage Prevention Conference was held pre-COVID, so it has been several years since we have been able to gather together for this vital conference. It felt great to gather again and network with those in our industry. Whether a member, excavator, locator, or vendor, it allowed us to see each other and talk about our business, how things have changed, and what we are doing in the future.

The Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) did a fabulous job assembling an event of this size. Many people think that you open the doors, and the event starts. But so much planning goes into these events, from the logistics of securing hotel rooms, guest speakers, and catering, to vendor preparation and set-up. Much effort goes into an event like this to make it successful, and we appreciate the SCC's efforts.

Those in attendance heard from keynote guest speakers such as Scott Hall, Vice President of the Damage Prevention Institute (DPI), Common Ground Alliance (CGA), bringing everyone up to date on the formation of DPI, the procedures they follow, and their goals for the future. Gaining additional insight into both DPI and CGA was highly beneficial.

The SCC also gave an overview of the new law changes that will go into effect as of July 1, 2023, which was both timely and appreciated.

During the midmorning on the first day, Taskforce 2022 members **Scott Brown** | Manager Damage Prevention - Washington Gas Light Company ("WGL"); **Andrew Brooks** | Damage Prevention Manager - Dominion Energy; **Aaron Campbell** | Senior Counsel - SCC Office of General Counsel; and **William H. Harrison IV** | Associate General Counsel, SCC Office of General Counsel, brought those in attendance up to date on items that they have been working on and how the law changes took place. They gave detailed information on what they focused on in 2022 and their hopes for moving forward in 2023.

A topic of particular interest to everyone was learning more about the various fiber projects across Virginia due to the new infrastructure bill approved in 2022. As you can imagine, this is affecting all of us in one way or another. As we see locate requests increase, work crew demands rise, which affect each of us in some form.

On day two, there was a panel presentation put together with a Rural Broadband Initiative. Panel members included **Sam Brumberg** | Vice President of Regulatory Affairs & General Counsel at Virginia, Maryland, Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives; **Gary Wood** | President, and CEO, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative; **Dr. Tamarah Holmes** | Director of the Office of Broadband - Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; and **Patrick Wiltshire** | Manager, Central Services - Shentel/GloFiber. These

individuals updated us on how their respective agencies handle projects, what they have experienced, and what we can expect in 2023 and beyond. It was an informative and highly insightful panel discussion.

Scott Crawford, CEO of Virginia 811, provided a presentation on Code 60, and shared some insights about items our organization has encountered since Code 60 changes became effective on January 1, 2023. He also discussed the new Code 60 app. He followed by taking questions from the audience about their experiences with the new Code 60 format.

Rosemary Langowski | Lead, Damage Prevention - Washington Gas; **Fernando Mendez** | Regional Marketing Liaison - Virginia 811; and **Brandie Carter** | Training and Outreach Specialist - URS, led a discussion panel on including the Spanish community in damage prevention. They reviewed the current statewide efforts by their respective organizations to reach the Spanish-speaking community. They also gave a progress update on the Spanish Excavator's Manual, which we hope to see soon.

Session A focused on Local Damage Prevention Committee (LDPC) meetings. **Tracey Lamb** | Principal Safety Specialist, Training and Outreach - URS; and **Andrew Brooks** | Damage Prevention Manager - Dominion Energy, brought great ideas on how to put together successful Local Damage Prevention Committee (LDPC) meetings. The panel discussed the value of these meetings, possible topics to review at each meeting, and the networking opportunities they present. Tracey Lamb gave an update on the Educational Credit program for participating in LDPC meeting participation, Membership meetings, and gave a general review of the Public Awareness Plan process.

Session B focused on excavator training. **Dave Thompson** | Safety Director - Henderson Inc.; **Ashley Hutson** | Director of Member Engagement - Heavy Construction Contractors Association; and **Tracey Lamb** | Principal Safety Specialist, Training and Outreach - URS, worked with the group in an open-floor format style to gain insight from the group on possible new approaches to training efforts. This feedback-based approach was an excellent opportunity to air concerns and ways we can improve our training efforts in the future.

The Virginia 811 team in attendance consisted of our 2022 Gold Shovel Winner, our entire Public Awareness Team, our President & CEO, our Head of Service and Communications, and our Communication and Branding Specialist. Our team was able to relate to all the ideas and concerns presented.

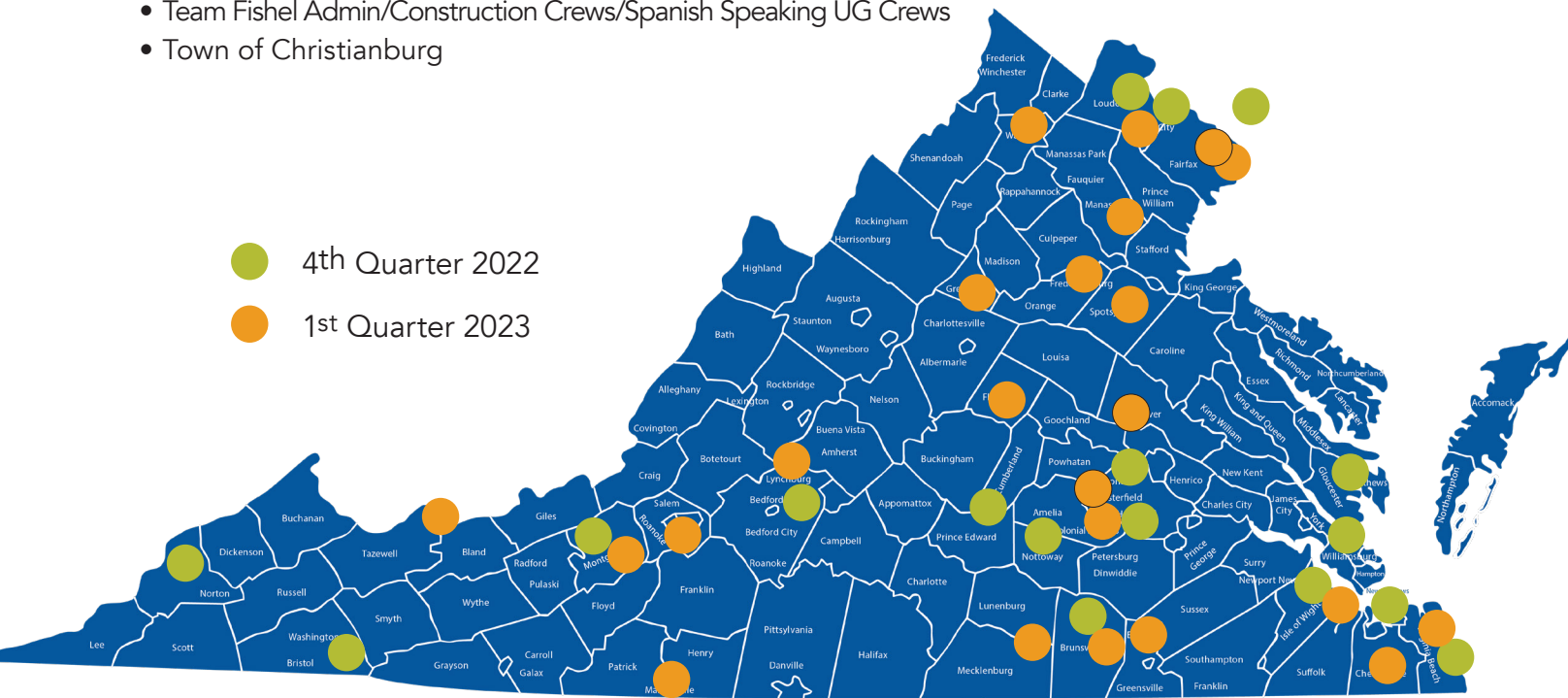
This 2023 conference made the perfect platform for all of us to get together and see how things are going within our industry. We all have different insights on matters and issues, and it was an excellent forum for us to hear from all sides.

A big "thank you" to the SCC for organizing a conference of this size, allowing us to gather and find ways to work together.

Virginia 811 Public Awareness Efforts

Education, Training, Community, and Display Truck Events

- Southside Community College - Brunswick
- Virginia 811 DPA New Hires - Virtual
- Appalachian Natural Gas Distribution Co. - Bristol
- ASUS - Fort Eustis
- C&N Construction
- City of Charlottesville - Charlottesville
- Coastal Fiber/Phoenix Fiber - Henrico
- Dominion Energy - York
- Terry Seeley - Waterviews at the Reservoir - Chesterfield
- J. Fletcher Creamer & Son, Inc.
- KK Electric - Williamsburg
- Mastec/OH Crew - Louisa
- Municipalities Rodeo - Hampton
- Myeligh Smith Motorsports - Langley Speedway
- Osmoste Utilities Services, Inc. - Loudoun
- Peninsula LDPC Meeting - Chesapeake
- PNC
- Riverstreet - Louisa - King and Queen
- Seaford Elementary School Program - York
- Team Fishel Admin/Construction Crews/Spanish Speaking UG Crews
- Town of Christianburg
- Town of Manassas Ground Crews
- Town of Vienna
- Utilities Unlimited
- Virginia Damage Prevention Conference - VA Beach
- VDOT - South Hill
- VDOT - Colonial Heights
- VDOT - Ashland
- Benchmark - Northern VA
- Spanish Presentation - SOVA and Chesterfield
- Canton Construction - Northern VA
- Gaff & Go Rodeo - Doswell
- Eastern LDPC - Chesapeake
- Viva Vienna - Northern VA
- Smithfield LDPC - Smithfield
- Bluefield LDPC - Bluefield, WV
- Lynchburg LDPC - Lynchburg
- Williamsburg LDPC - Williamsburg



3,441 Individuals Trained YTD

Gaff-N-Go Rodeo

VMDAEC ANNUAL LINEWORKER EVENT

Virginia 811 participated again this year at the Virginia, Maryland, & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) Gaff-n-Go Rodeo Lineworker's Rodeo on May 19-20, 2023, in Doswell, Virginia. Over 300 lineworkers competed this year and the event drew a crowd of over 1,000 people. Lineworker teams were there, from NOVAC, Dominion Energy, Mecklenburg, Shenandoah Valley and Rappahannock, Delaware Electric Cooperative, and many more. The Virginia 811 team was on hand for the second year in a row to sponsor the event's Kids Zone along with Choptank Electric Cooperative. Children's activities included a coloring contest, a social media photo contest using a custom "Know What's Below" selfie photo frame, cornhole boards, and a custom-built sensory sandbox table where kids could use small toy backhoes, dump trucks, and excavators to dig in to find underground utility lines. Birdseed provided the perfect eco-friendly sand substitute for this activity! The 2023 Gaff & Go Rodeo concluded with a closing banquet at the Hilton in Short Pump, Virginia with over 730 people in attendance. Brian Morehouse, Manager of Public Awareness for Virginia 811, was the Master of Ceremonies, handing out the awards for the evening with Todd Butcher, Manager of Safety Training at VMDAEC Training Center. Virginia 811 was proud to be part of this event again this year to have the opportunity to share the Dig with CARE message with such a wonderful crowd!



Martinsville Xfinity Race

CALL811.COM BEFORE YOU DIG 250

Virginia 811, along with AZ811, NC811, TN811, SC811, OH811, UT811, MissDig and fellow partners Stake Center, PHMSA and Verizon, took part in hosting the **Call811.com Before You Dig 250** at Martinsville Speedway in Ridgeway, VA on April 15th, 2023. Those that came out to the track or watched the race on TV witnessed a great event! John Hunter Nemechek took the checkered flag, while leading 198 of the 250-lap race event and literally burned the tires right off his race car while doing a burnout heading over to Victory Lane to receive the famous Martinsville Clock Trophy. It was great to work alongside and get to know our fellow sponsors better as part of the partnership. This combined effort helped draw large numbers of race fans to the Call811.com tent located in the fan zone on race day. One special guest on hand was Josh Williams, driver of the Call811.com #92 Chevy Camaro that races in the Xfinity Series. Josh was a big draw to the tent where he signed autographs for fans. This was the second year that Virginia 811 has sponsored the Xfinity Series race event at Martinsville Speedway and it provides a great opportunity to promote the **Contact 811 Before You Dig** message. This year's race was seen by almost 1 million viewers on Fox Sports 1 (FS1).

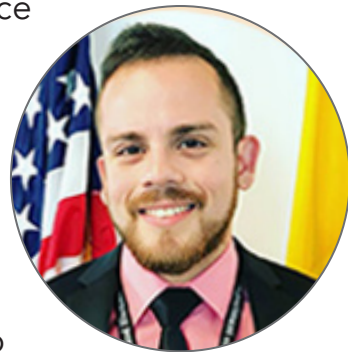


GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD WINNER

FERNANDO MENDEZ

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD
FIRST QUARTER

Fernando Mendez has been with Virginia 811 since September 2, 2020, in the position of Regional Multimedia Marketing Liaison. He specializes in graphic design, web development, and video. He attends events with stakeholders and serves as a representative for Virginia 811 at home shows, networking events, and other public events involving or promoting the Virginia 811 messaging. He is also bilingual and reaches out to the Spanish community to set up training sessions to promote damage prevention throughout Virginia. He was very instrumental in setting up the Virginia 811 Academy for online training videos that can be located on the VA811.com website.



“ Fernando has demonstrated great initiative in taking the Public Awareness team to the next level with his work on the Virginia 811 Academy, 811 social media, and with 811 training and marketing efforts. Fernando has helped build our Spanish speaking program at Virginia 811 over the last four months to a program that is one of the best on the East coast. He has worked with the SCC and Washington Gas in implementing the Spanish version of the Professional Excavator’s Manual. Through all these efforts, and many more, he has shown true leadership this quarter. ”



Congratulations Fernando as the recipient of the Golden Shovel Award - First Quarter!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Team Members Celebrating
Their Service to Virginia 811 This Quarter

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE

Marcy Carroll 4/8/2002 21 Years of Service	Heather Minnix 5/13/2002 21 Years of Service	Lisa Davis 6/29/2015 8 Years of Service
Dina Kimball 4/15/2002 21 Years of Service	Kari Harris 5/20/2002 21 Years of Service	Maya Lane 6/29/2015 8 Years of Service
Christy Penn-Hale 4/15/2002 21 Years of Service	Alice Miller 5/20/2002 21 Years of Service	Nicole Hodges 4/26/2021 2 Years of Service
Dorothy Smith 4/15/2002 21 Years of Service	Brenda Matheny 6/3/2002 21 Years of Service	Kaitlyn Lumpkin 4/26/2021 2 Years of Service
Cookie Rader 4/22/2001 21 Years of Service	Lori Saunders 6/3/2002 21 Years of Service	Michelle Jones 5/10/2021 2 Years of Service
Vicki Settle 4/22/2002 21 Years of Service	Marcia Hill 6/10/2002 21 Years of Service	Meredith LeBlanc 4/25/2022 1 Year of Service
Diana Stokes 4/22/2002 21 Years of Service	Missy Montaigne 5/27/2003 20 Years of Service	Neva Zeedyk 4/25/2022 1 Year of Service



Together they bring a combined **317** years of experience to the Virginia 811 team!

HAPPY TRAILS STEVE DUNCAN



Best Wishes to Virginia 811's Original Display Truck Road Warrior

Virginia 811's Steve Duncan will be retiring on June 9, 2023, after more than 21 years of service to our organization. As a charter team member, Steve joined Virginia 811 as a Facilities Specialist on March 11, 2002, where he oversaw the maintenance and care of the Blue Hills and Roanoke Higher Education offices for Virginia 811. He has since been promoted to Communications and Facilities Specialist.

Steve has long been known as the "MacGyver" of Virginia 811. His talents for maintenance and inventive repairs are notorious; with very little he can't troubleshoot or repair. As a bonus to his teammates, it's not uncommon for him to help with mechanical problems related to vehicles or household appliances by offering sound advice to anyone who asks.

He and Rick Marchenko, retired Manager of IT, made quite the team for many years with their stage designs for the annual Hotel Roanoke event, *Fashions for Evergreens*. Their designs earned Virginia 811 many awards and recognitions during the years, and each year their designs grew in scale and complexity. Together they built quite a following, with people waiting with anticipation each year for the annual unveiling of the Virginia 811 holiday display to see what fanciful creations they had achieved that year.

Steve and Rick also traveled to the west coast to procure our custom LED display truck. They made the return road trip crossing the United States, driving the truck back to Virginia to become a marketing tool for the Public Awareness team.

Since then, Steve has traveled many miles driving to all corners of Virginia and beyond, representing our organization. This task often required clocking long hours throughout the week and on weekends setting up the truck at industry and community events. In addition to being responsible for truck logistics and facilities management, he has always made himself available to help and support his teammates in the PAT department with whatever needs to be done.

Forever the office prankster, Steve always looks for ways to make people smile with his unique inventions and sense of humor. Whether doing repairs, designing a holiday tree, or traveling throughout Virginia for sponsored events, Steve always manages to leave a little humor in his wake.

We wish Steve much happiness in his retirement. His knowledge, work ethic, and penchant for a little harmless mischief will be missed.

Steve, enjoy your retirement journey, and thank you for the years of your passion to serve and dedication to safety for our team members and damage prevention partners.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR 21 YEARS OF SERVICE TO VIRGINIA 811.

The Virginia 811 Scholarship

CLOSING SOON

A reminder that the Virginia 811 Scholarship will be closing on June 15, 2023.

In its third year, the Virginia 811 Scholarship Program awards two (2), one-year, \$1,500 college scholarships to Virginia students planning to attend an accredited community college, trade school or four-year college or university by the following fall.

This year, in response to a shortage in craft positions across the Commonwealth, Virginia 811 has extended the student status requirements to include adult learners. As the industry grows and demand for these trade skills increases, the opportunity to assist individuals interested in entering the industry is not only vital, it seems a natural fit for Virginia 811.

For more information about the scholarship program, please visit <https://va811.com/scholarship-program/>.

PAT Department Updates

WELCOMINGS & CONGRATULATIONS

WELCOME MOLLY AVERY



Molly Avery

The Virginia 811 Public Awareness team has welcomed Molly Avery as a new Regional Public Awareness Liaison. Molly will serve as liaison in the Eastern and Central Virginia areas of the state. Molly holds a B.S. in Community Health from Radford University and a M.Ed. in Special Education from Regent University. Prior to joining Virginia 811, Molly held a teaching position with Newport News Public Schools.

CONGRATULATIONS BRIAN MOREHOUSE

Congratulations to Brian Morehouse on his new position as Manager of Public Awareness.



Brian Morehouse

MAKING THE CASE

Virginia 811 Challenges ChatGPT to Explore the Benefits and Draw-Backs of Using Virtual Reality in Damage Prevention Training

POINT

Write an essay discussing the **benefits of using virtual reality (VR)** in damage prevention training.

The following is ChatGPT's response.

Virtual reality (VR) technology has gained immense popularity in various fields, including education and training. One area where VR has proven particularly useful is in damage prevention training. Damage prevention training involves educating employees and other stakeholders on how to prevent accidents and reduce the risk of property damage. VR offers several benefits when used in damage prevention training, including increased engagement, cost-effectiveness, and improved retention of information.

One significant benefit of using VR in damage prevention training is increased engagement. Traditional training methods, such as classroom lectures or online training modules, can be tedious and may not fully capture employees' attention. In contrast, VR creates an immersive experience that engages users in a way that traditional training methods cannot. By providing a realistic, interactive environment, VR allows users to experience potentially dangerous situations in a safe and controlled setting. This type of engagement not only makes the training more enjoyable, but it also helps employees retain the information better and apply it in real-world situations.

Another benefit of using VR in damage prevention training is cost-effectiveness. Traditional training methods can be expensive, particularly when they involve practical exercises that require expensive equipment or facilities. By contrast, VR training requires only a headset and a computer or other device capable of running VR software. This means that businesses can provide high-quality, immersive training without incurring significant costs. Additionally, VR training modules can be reused multiple times, allowing employees to refresh their knowledge as needed, further reducing costs.

Finally, using VR in damage prevention training can improve retention of information. Studies have shown that VR training is more effective than traditional training methods in terms of long-term retention of information. This is because VR creates an immersive experience that allows users to practice and apply the information they learn in a realistic environment. By experiencing the consequences of their actions in a virtual setting, users can learn from their mistakes without the risk of causing damage or injury. This type of experiential learning is particularly effective in damage prevention training because it allows employees to develop a better understanding of the potential risks and the consequences of not following proper procedures.

In conclusion, virtual reality technology has several benefits when used in damage prevention training. It increases engagement by providing an immersive experience that traditional training methods cannot match. It is also cost-effective and can improve retention of information, which is crucial in a field like damage prevention where mistakes can have serious consequences. As VR technology continues to evolve and become more accessible, we can expect to see it being used more frequently in various industries to provide better and more effective training experiences.

Write an essay discussing **why VR should not be used** in damage prevention training.

The following is ChatGPT's response.

While virtual reality (VR) has numerous benefits in damage prevention training, it is important to acknowledge some potential drawbacks and limitations of this technology.

Firstly, VR technology can be expensive to set up and maintain. Although VR headsets have become more affordable in recent years, the cost of developing and updating the software and hardware can still be a significant investment for organizations. This may limit its accessibility to smaller companies or those with limited budgets.

Secondly, not everyone may be comfortable using VR technology. Some people may experience motion sickness or other adverse effects from using VR headsets, which can lead to a negative experience and reduced engagement with the training. Additionally, some people may have difficulty learning in a virtual environment, which may affect their ability to retain information and apply it in the real world.

Another potential drawback of VR in damage prevention training is that it may not fully replicate the complexity and unpredictability of real-world situations. While VR can simulate various scenarios, it may not be able to account for all possible factors and variables that could arise in a real-world situation. This could lead to a false sense of security or over-reliance on the VR training, which may result in employees not being adequately prepared for actual situations.

Finally, VR technology may not be suitable for all types of damage prevention training. For example, some types of training may require hands-on experience with equipment or machinery, which cannot be fully replicated in a virtual environment. In these cases, a combination of VR training and traditional hands-on training may be more effective.

In conclusion, while VR technology has numerous benefits in damage prevention training, it is important to consider its potential drawbacks and limitations. Factors such as cost, user comfort, and limitations in replicating real-world situations should be taken into account when deciding whether or not to use VR technology in training programs. Ultimately, the decision to use VR should be based on a thorough analysis of the organization's needs and resources, as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of VR in achieving the desired training outcomes.

COUNTERPOINT

ChatGPT

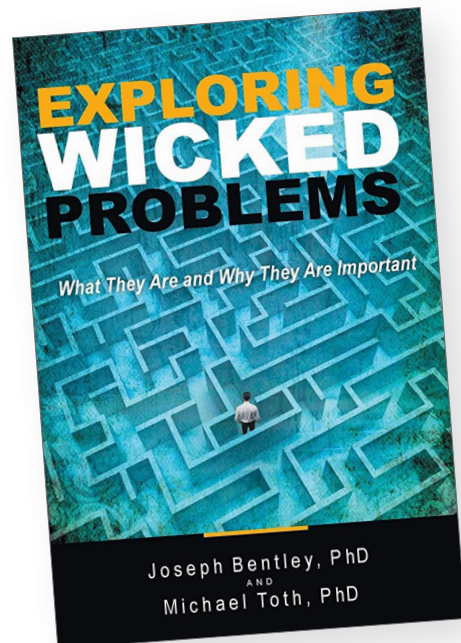


Tackling the Many Challenges Faced in Life and Business

Book Review of *Exploring Wicked Problems*: What They Are and Why They Are Important



- B. Scott Crawford



When my daughter entered Radford University as a freshman in fall 2022, she had a general idea of her major and a less than general idea for a minor. Midway through that first semester she changed her major to psychology and told me she was going to minor in “Wicked Problems,” a new program of study that combines political science, religious studies, and philosophy. Coming from a strong humanities background, my interest was piqued, so I began to examine Radford’s website to learn more about this program (see <https://tinyurl.com/3ccxr4jn>).

My search led me to a recommended book that builds on the early 1970s research of social scientists Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber. Rittel and Webber argue that there are really two types of problems we face in life and business: problems that can be solved through straightforward solutions, or “tame problems,” and problems that are complex and simply cannot be solved, or “wicked problems.” Inspired by this earlier work, Joseph Bentley and Michael Toth, in their book *Exploring Wicked Problems*, set out to remind readers that not all problems are equal, and it is of the utmost importance that we identify problems we examine as tame or wicked problems. If we have found a wicked problem, Bentley and Toth provide insight into how to better understand and approach the problem, with a recognition that at best wicked problems must be tamed rather than solved.



In order to approach a wicked problem, those addressing the issue need to identify where exactly they want to be, where they currently are, and what issues are in the gap between those two places. As an example, we in damage prevention want to be at 0 damages per 1,000 tickets. This is not a tame problem as there is no one solution; to reach 0 damages is truly a wicked problem. We then must examine where we are. We, in Virginia, are currently around, or just under, 1 damage per 1,000 tickets. This is phenomenal – but it is not 0. The next step is to identify the host of challenges and variables that fill the gap between where we are and where we want to be. This list may be quite extensive, from issues such as digging without a ticket, to excavators not respecting marks, to not updating utility mapping, to locate mismarks to . . . the list goes on. What we then must do is focus on one, or more, of these issues and identify how to address that issue, recognizing that in many cases even these problems within the gap are wicked problems themselves that cannot be solved but only tamed! This is why Bentley and Toth refer to those tackling wicked problems as being in “the swamp.” This is not clean and clear cut, working in a safe “high ground;” it is filled with muck!

While *Exploring Wicked Problems* is not incredibly “deep” and thought provoking, it is a strong reminder that it is important to better understand and then categorize the problems we face. Doing so can help us approach challenges and find ways to navigate the many complex, or wicked, problems we face in damage prevention.

I am happy my daughter has embraced this new program, and I am encouraged Radford University is offering a minor focused on problem-based learning and critical thinking. The program should develop the skills our workforce needs as we can all admit with supply chain issues, adjusting to a post-pandemic work environment, fast-paced advancements in technology, and an increasingly unstable global geo-political environment, we need skilled thinkers to help us navigate numerous wicked problems.



