

The Virginia 811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



VIRGINIA 811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2023

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

B. Scott Crawford

As 2023 comes to an end, it is projected overall ticket volume will be almost equal to 2022. This means for four years in a row locate requests have been higher than the Pre-Pandemic period. 2020 and 2021 were record years, and 2022 and 2023 have now fallen right in between the first two years of the Pandemic. While arguably the shutdown during 2020 and lingering effects of the Pandemic continuing through 2021 contributed to these record years (fence installation was the top work type, suggesting “Covid puppies” were real), the Infrastructure Bill and rural broadband expansion initiative has contributed to continued strong locate request volume over the course of 2022 and 2023; and projections indicate this will only grow over the next two years!

While strong stakeholder focused committees, including Taskforce 2022/23 and the Co-op Town Halls, have continuously met over the course of 2022 and 2023, there is still a need for concrete solutions to be put in place to support locators as they meet the increased demand for locates in rural areas across the state. For the first time in over two decades, due in large part to this issue, the Damage Prevention Act was amended in somewhat significant ways. As of July 1, 2023, Special Project Tickets were removed as a ticket type, the scope of locate requests was lowered from one mile to 1/3 of a mile, and potential fines for violating the Damage Prevention Act increased. Also, significantly, it is now legal for excavators to schedule locate requests up to 12 business days in advance, which will be available in early 2024. However, even with these changes, October 2023 witnessed the highest No Show rate for any month in over five years, and it is projected that No Shows for 2023 will be roughly 63% higher than 2022, even as ticket volume will end around the same level as last year.

Only through continued dialogue can solutions be identified and implemented. It is inspiring as stakeholders continue to meet in multiple venues, searching for ways to address this new challenge to damage prevention. There are some strong, viable actions being discussed that can definitely help. For one, Virginia 811 has committed both financial and human resources to develop and put in place software to facilitate communication between utilities involved in rural and urban broadband installation and affected operators six months before fiber installation begins in a particular region. This was piloted and will work.

Second, Virginia 811 is committed to the concept of electronic white lining. Being able to allow excavators to mark on maps within Ticket Entry software, detailing, visually, very specific and accurate areas of excavation, will help locators focus their efforts on an excavation area more aligned with the actual scope of work. This could potentially save locators anywhere from 30-70% in the time spent to locate utilities on a specific locate request ticket. Such time savings will allow locators to process more requests each day, thus driving down No Shows.

While these solutions offer some hope, there are still hurdles we must address. Those involved in fiber installation need to provide Virginia 811 with plans related to projects occurring six months in the future. Operators receiving information from Virginia 811 must take action and share this information with locators. The infrastructure for this communication is in place, but it must be used to be effective. As for electronic white lining, there are a host of issues to confront, including, but not limited to, some in the industry not having access to the technology needed to utilize electronic white lining; addressing concerns that text might describe excavation areas larger than images indicate, resulting in locators still having to locate to the largest description; the need for at least eight to ten months to create the software and adequately test it; and the challenge of ensuring that excavators actually use this feature once it is available.

While hurdles must be confronted and cleared, I firmly believe that stakeholders will come together and make these solutions happen. What we must remember, though, is that we are all in this together, as a team, and that we must use data to drive our decisions. We must not be sidetracked by addressing issues that lack clear evidence of causing or contributing to the challenges the industry is encountering regarding timely locates. Pursuing unrelated issues only hinders our progress; it is essential to recognize this and collaborate on solutions driven by data.

- B. Scott Crawford
President & CEO
Virginia 811

NAVIGATING NEW HORIZONS

Professional Development and Education Team's Transformation in 2023

Virginia 811 is proud to celebrate a significant milestone - the seamless transition of our team members into their new roles. Observing their development and ability to handle new responsibilities has been genuinely uplifting, showcasing a shared commitment to excellence that characterizes the culture of our organization.

Alongside this accomplishment, our exceptional team has immersed themselves in training for the latest mapping upgrade. From mastering new ways to draw and edit polygons to exploring different aerial views and navigating the map in innovative ways, their commitment to acquiring these skills has been nothing short of remarkable.

This dedication is a testament to their adaptability and vital roles in propelling Virginia 811's evolution forward. Their proficiency in the new mapping training not only underscores their eagerness to excel but also highlights their commitment to enhancing their expertise - crucial attributes in today's ever-evolving professional landscape.

By showcasing such agility, our team members aren't just demonstrating personal growth; they're significantly contributing to Virginia 811's growth trajectory. Throughout September and October, our Professional Development and Education Specialists also invested time in their own growth, attending courses at Louisiana State University for Learning Experience Design and Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)-approved courses on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI).

This commitment ensures that our Professional Development Team can create industry-specific, in-house content, offering a comprehensive approach to skill development. By staying at the forefront of industry trends, they are helping reinforce our commitment to providing exceptional value to both our team members and the organization as a whole. Here's to continuous growth and success!



JANUARY TICKET PRICE INCREASE



As of July 1, 2023, Virginia 811 implemented a 5-cent increase in ticket prices, with another 5-cent increase scheduled for **January 1, 2024**.

This phased approach is a response to rising costs, including labor, utilities, and general supplies, driven by record-high inflation. Virginia 811, as a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit, is dedicated to maintaining low ticket prices for its Members but acknowledges the need for adjustments.

The July increase was the first in over a decade, and another evaluation will occur in 2024 to determine if an additional 5-cent increase is necessary on January 1, 2025. This measured strategy aims to balance operational needs, technology investment, and Member cost considerations. The Virginia 811 Board of Directors approved this approach in the September 2022 meeting.

We deeply appreciate your continued support as we navigate these adjustments to better serve you and safeguard life and property.

FAST FACTS

CHANNEL	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
PHONE	417,872	29.6%
WTE	561,226	39.7%
SAT	249,106	17.6%
TRE	185,366	13.1%
Total	1,413,570	

Total Internet Originated Tickets YTD 2023

995,698

(70.4% of all tickets)

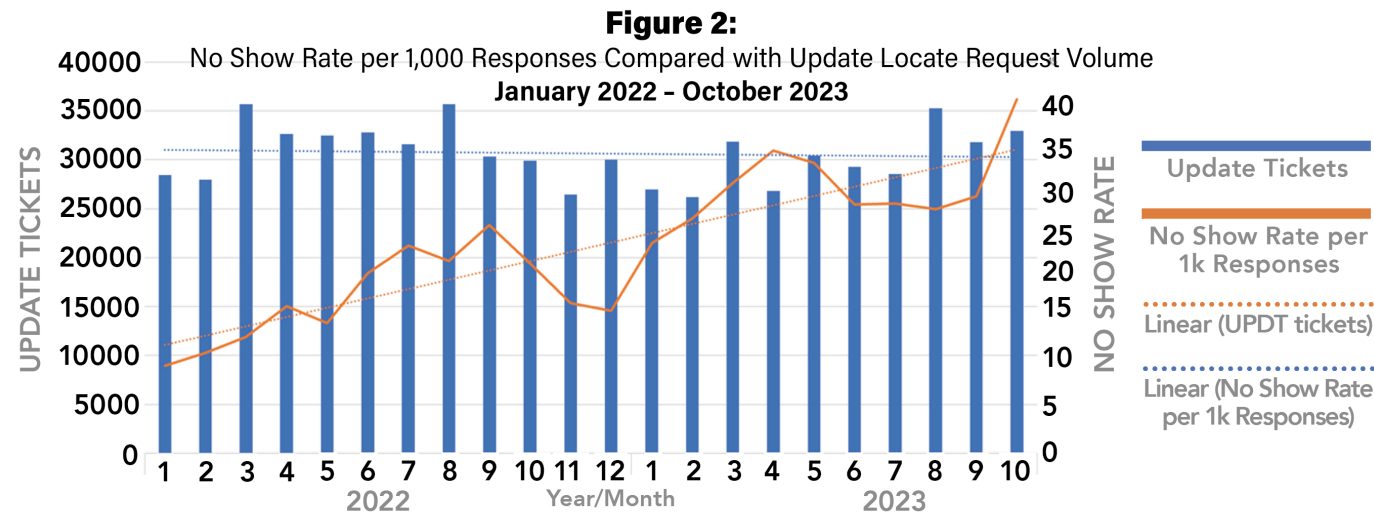
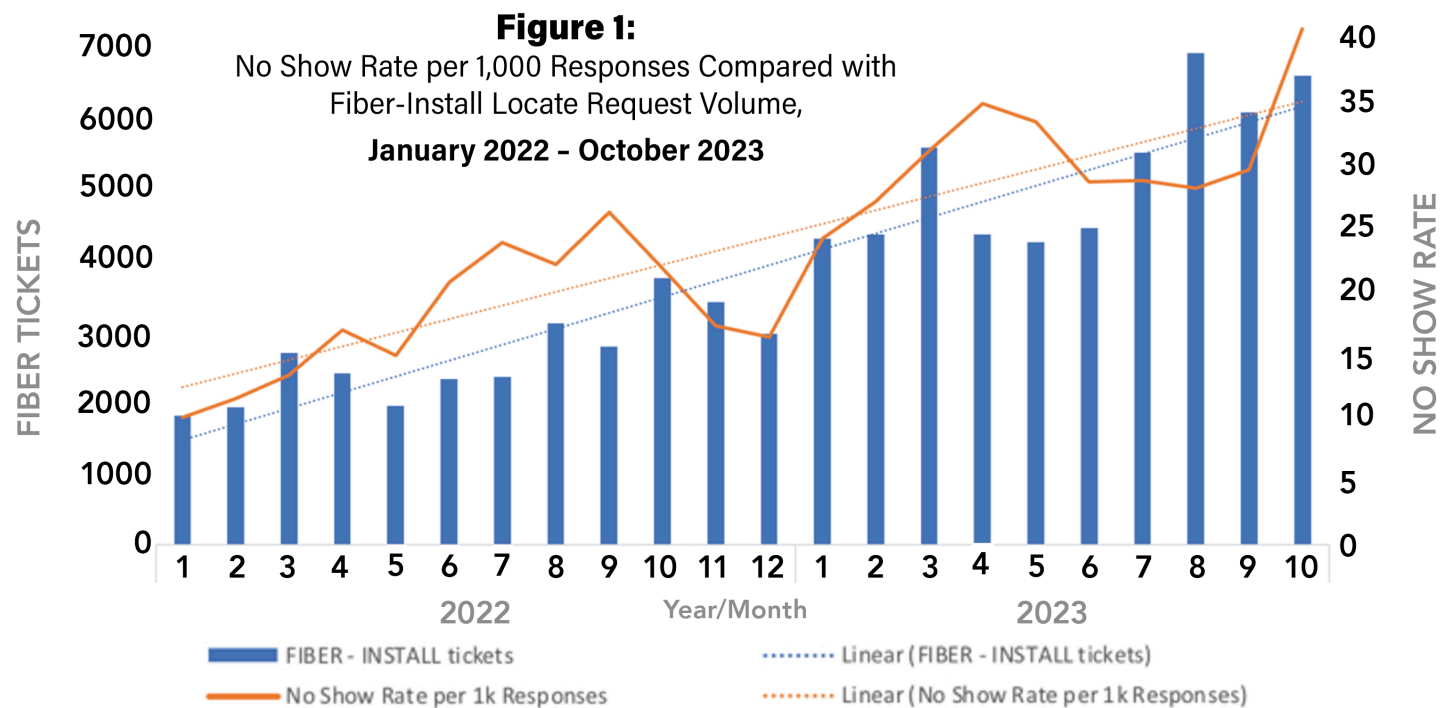
The Need for Data-Driven Solutions to the Rural Broadband Expansion Initiative

- B. Scott Crawford

A truly noble effort is currently underway across the United States, and Virginia has not been excluded. Recognizing the importance for homes throughout the country to have access to high-speed Internet, the federal government is subsidizing broadband expansion in rural areas. These areas, due to high costs involved in servicing them, were sorely lacking the ability to fully confront the lockdown that accompanied the recent Pandemic. The Pandemic demonstrated how important broadband Internet is as those households with access to it were able to allow adults to work from home, students to remain connected to classrooms, and a host of goods and services remained accessible. Those households without high-speed Internet were at a clear disadvantage, with adults either finding an inability to earn income, children having to drive miles to sit in a public library's parking lot to access free Internet, and/or families not finding information needed to stay fully informed. Even access to healthcare was an issue as those without high-speed Internet could not use video conferencing to access doctors and other healthcare professionals. Arguably, the Pandemic demonstrated broadband service is not simply a want, it is a need.

With the Infrastructure Bill, over \$60 billion has been directed toward the expansion of broadband across the United States. The release of this money to subsidize

rural broadband expansion has placed pressure on the 811 process, specifically with timely locates. In Virginia, Virginia 811 has continuously exceeded all metrics it is expected to meet within the Damage Prevention Act and the Rules Governing the Notification Center. While ticket volume reached record highs in 2020 and 2021 and has settled between those years in both 2022 and 2023, the notification center continues to meet and exceed all expectations, processing locate requests and ensuring all requests are delivered within articulated expectations.

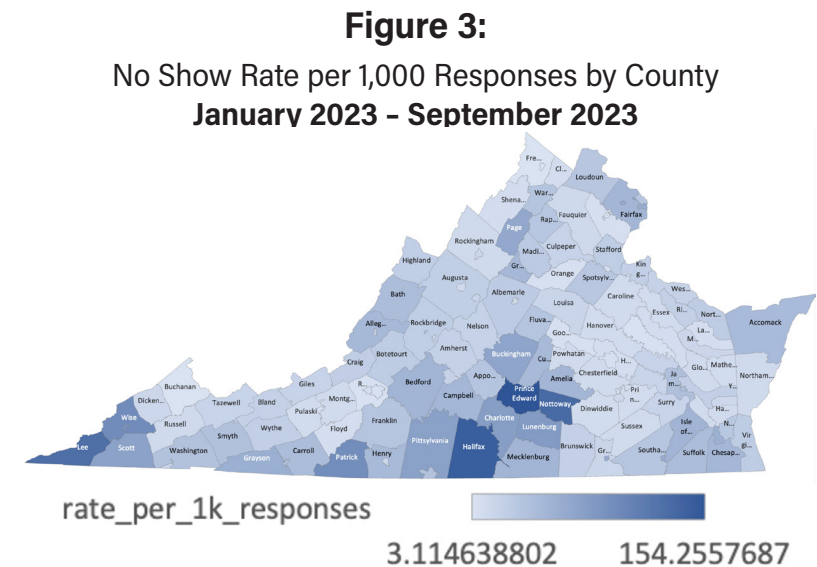


Locate request volume for 2023 will end up being at roughly the exact same level as it was in 2022. However, No Shows are projected to be, end of year, ~63% over 2022. October 2023 alone witnessed a record number of No Shows within at least the past five years. Larger than Pre-Pandemic levels, with a notable increase in locate requests occurring in rural areas, has fueled this pressure on ensuring timely locates. Figure 1, covering the period between January 2022 and October 2023, supports this observation as the trend line related to work involving fiber installation is on a notable upward trend. Similarly, No Shows over the period are on an upward trend, but the fiber installation work type trend line is at a slightly higher slope. Also noteworthy is that, in general, as fiber install locate requests increase in any given month, so too do No Shows, and, conversely, as fiber install locate requests decrease, No Shows decrease as well. Taken together, the data suggests a positive correlation exists between fiber install locate requests and No Shows.

If the data related to fiber install locate requests and No Shows were not aligned in this manner, and if the fiber install locate requests were remaining static or on a downward trend while No Shows remained on an upward trend, a negative correlation could be suggested. This would be reinforced if rather than upward and downward ticks in both during a given month almost perfectly mirroring each other the opposite were true, and when one went up in numbers the other went down, and vice versa. Interestingly, such a negative correlation is suggested when comparing No Shows with Update locate requests

during the same period. As Figure 2 demonstrates, while No Shows are on an upward trend, Update locate requests are actually on a slight downward trend. When looking at monthly numbers of No Shows and Update locate requests, rather than mirroring each other, almost perfectly when No Shows increase, Updates decrease, and when No Shows decrease, Updates increase.

The data is fairly clear: increased locate requests in rural areas, specifically related to fiber installation, are related to the increase in No Shows Virginia is currently witnessing. Even when looking at the geographic distribution of No Shows across Virginia it becomes evident that No Shows are occurring at a higher rate in rural regions, in many cases in municipalities receiving funding for broadband expansion (See Figure 3).



Admittedly, this overview is only at a cursory level. The pressure being placed on having timely locates is somewhat multifaceted and complex. In order to gain a better understanding of the data, Virginia 811 has enlisted the services of the Statistics Department at Virginia Tech to engage literally millions of data points to provide a more thorough analysis. This report and analysis should be complete in early to mid-December. As Virginia 811 receives this report, the report will be made available to all stakeholders for review. It is hoped that through this examination of the data we, working together, will find the solutions needed to relieve the pressure currently being placed on the 811 system.

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD WINNER

JERRY ALTICE

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD 3rd QUARTER

We are proud to announce **Jerry Altice** as the recipient of the Golden Shovel Award for the third quarter. Since joining our organization on March 29, 2019, as a Damage Prevention Specialist (DPS), Jerry has consistently proven to be an invaluable asset to our team. In recognition of his dedication and exceptional contributions, Jerry transitioned to the role of Web Ticket Quality Coordinator on June 16, 2021.

In his role, Jerry plays a pivotal part in maintaining the high standards of excellence synonymous with Virginia 811. As a meticulous reviewer of tickets entered by Web Ticket Entry (WTE) users and Single Address Ticket (SAT) 2.0 users, Jerry's keen eye for detail ensures that each ticket meets the highest standards of accuracy, consistency, and quality.

Not only does Jerry conduct thorough audits of WTE tickets, ensuring the uniformity and precision of information, but he has also been instrumental in testing the chat application with our IT team, showcasing his versatility and commitment to enhancing our operational processes.

Jerry's exceptional performance, commitment to quality, and willingness to go above and beyond in testing and collaboration make him a well-deserved recipient of this award. We congratulate Jerry on this well-earned recognition and extend our deepest appreciation for his continued dedication to Virginia 811.

“ Jerry's proactive, can-do attitude and commitment shine as he tackles tasks with clarity and delivers exceptional results, extending assistance to teammates and fostering a positive work environment. His strong work ethic and adaptability, seen in extra hours and a solution-oriented approach, make Jerry's contributions to Virginia 811 truly noteworthy. ”



Congratulations to Jerry Altice, the well-deserved recipient of the Golden Shovel Award for the Third Quarter!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Team Members Celebrating
Their Service to Virginia 811 This Quarter

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE

Kayla DeHart

10/27/2014 | 9 Years of Service

Karen Wiseman

11/29/2021 | 2 Years of Service

Scott Crawford

12/19/2016 | 7 Years of Service

Samantha Young

11/29/2021 | 2 Years of Service

Devian Trevey-Boitnott

12/4/2017 | 6 Years of Service

Jeremy Berrios

12/5/2022 | 1 Year of Service

Vanessa Dye

11/29/2021 | 2 Years of Service

Madison Brimmer

12/5/2022 | 1 Year of Service

Mark Raleigh

11/29/2021 | 2 Years of Service

Stephen Schultes

12/5/2022 | 1 Year of Service

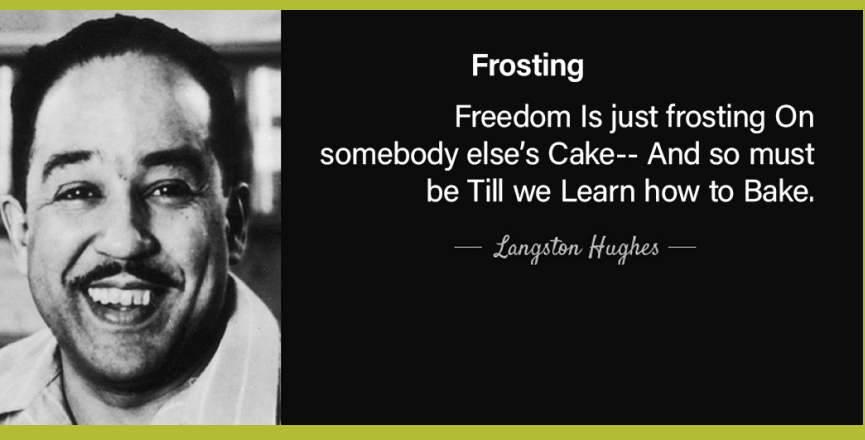


Together they bring a combined
33 years of experience to the Virginia 811 team!

Empowering Autonomy:

Insights for Business Leaders from Langston Hughes' 'Frosting'

Langston Hughes' succinct yet profound poem "Frosting" encapsulates a vital lesson for business leaders about fostering autonomy in the workplace. Through its vivid metaphor of cake and frosting, the poem delineates a deeper understanding of autonomy, not as a superficial layer of freedom granted to employees, but as a fundamental skill and capability that must be developed from within.



Frosting

Freedom Is just frosting On
somebody else's Cake-- And so must
be Till we Learn how to Bake.

— Langston Hughes —

The opening lines, "Freedom / Is just frosting / On somebody else's / Cake -," can be interpreted as a critique of superficial empowerment in the workplace. In many organizations, autonomy is often mistaken as a mere perk or benefit handed down from leadership, akin to the frosting on a cake made by someone else. This approach, Hughes suggests, is inherently flawed. True autonomy cannot be gifted; it must be ingrained in the very fabric of an organization's culture and its employees' roles.

The concluding lines, "And so must be / Till we / Learn how to / Bake," bring forth the essence of the poem's message for business leaders: the necessity of teaching and empowering employees to 'bake their own cake.' This metaphor translates to equipping team members with the skills, resources, and

decision-making authority they need to be truly autonomous. It implies creating an environment where employees are not just executing tasks but are involved in the decision-making process, encouraged to innovate, and given the freedom to pursue solutions and strategies that they believe in.

For business leaders, this means shifting from a directive style of leadership to a more facilitative and enabling one. It involves investing in employees' professional development, providing opportunities for them to take ownership of projects, and creating a culture where failure is seen as a learning opportunity rather than a setback. Such an environment not only fosters autonomy but also drives engagement, innovation, and loyalty.

Moreover, Hughes' poem subtly underscores the importance of inclusivity in autonomy. Just as every part of the cake is vital, every team member's contribution is essential. Leaders must ensure that autonomy is not just the privilege of a few but an integral aspect of every employee's experience in the organization.

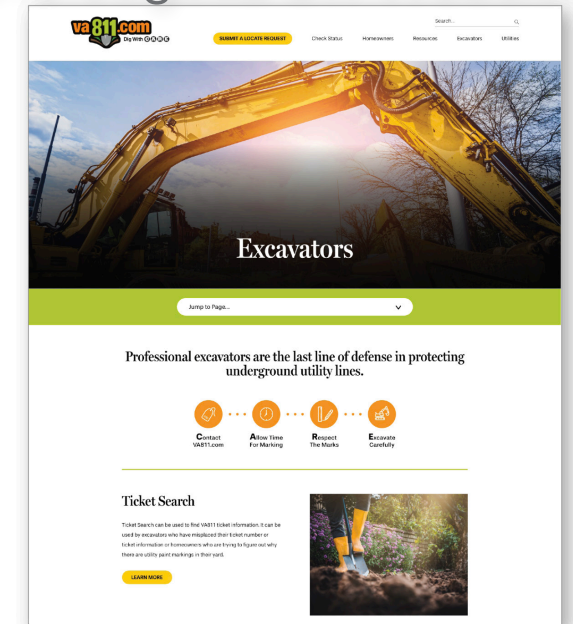
In conclusion, Langston Hughes' "Frosting" imparts a valuable lesson for business leaders: autonomy at work is not just a superficial layer of freedom granted to employees; it's about empowering them to be the architects of their own work, fostering an environment where they can develop, grow, and contribute meaningfully. This approach not only enhances individual performance but also propels the organization towards greater innovation and success.

The above essay was written entirely by ChatGPT4, a natural language generator chatbot developed by OpenAI. The prompt to which ChatGPT4 responded was "Write an essay in which you interpret Langston Hughes' poem 'Frosting' in relation to insight business leaders could find related to helping their team members find autonomy at work."



A NEW LOOK to the Virginia 811 Website

Get ready for an enhanced experience! This December, Virginia 811 is proud to unveil a revamped website design, bringing you improved features and a more user-friendly interface. We're dedicated to making your interactions with us smoother and more efficient. Stay tuned for an upgraded online hub designed with you in mind!



COMING DECEMBER 2023

CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERISM



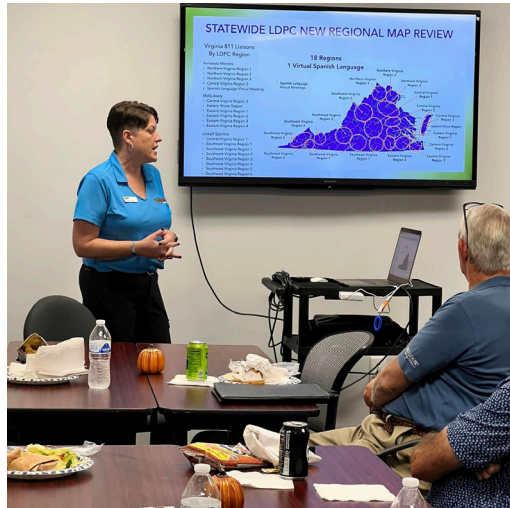
Five-Year Dedication Leaves an Indelible Mark on JA's Mission

Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia announced that the volunteer for the month of October is Cathy Waldron. Cathy is a retired team member from Virginia 811 and has continued to be a dedicated member of the Junior Achievement (JA) volunteer community for over five years, and her contributions have been invaluable to JA's organization. During her tenure, she not only served in the classroom, but has played a pivotal role in assisting the JA Team in securing in-kind donations, sponsorships, and actively participating in JA events. Cathy's tireless dedication and support have significantly contributed to the success of the JA mission.

“ My favorite part of volunteering for JA is when students see me out and recognize me years later. It makes my heart smile to know that what I teach to a kid in second grade sticks with them for years. If you haven't volunteered for JA yet... go for it! ”

PAT Virginia 811 Public Awareness & Training Team

A Journey of Community Engagement & Growth



The Virginia 811 Public Awareness & Training team has navigated a whirlwind of activity since our last newsletter, and the momentum only continues to build. August was a bustling month with our liaisons covering all four regions, but little did we know that the following three months would surpass any level of activity we've experienced in recent years. The valuable additions of Molly Avery and Tim Poole to our department have played a crucial role in meeting the demands for training and marketing opportunities.

September marked our second consecutive year attending the State Fair of Virginia, where our Virginia 811 Display truck took center stage, capturing the attention of thousands. The 10-day event was a tremendous success, with attendees expressing admiration for our display truck and its captivating LED screens.

Despite the anticipation of a slowdown post-August, our team recognized that September, October, and November are equally bustling. We expanded our outreach during LDPC meetings, venturing into new territories, including our first Eastern Shore LDPC meeting, which drew over 28 attendees. The roadshow continued with our team attending 20 Paradigm meetings across Virginia, bringing together first responders, excavators, and the community to delve into Virginia 811 procedures.



Teaming up with VDOT, we were part of various events, including the Virginia Department of Transportation Roadeo, where our display truck and marketing table took center stage. The experience was a testament to the fun and planning that goes into such events.

October saw the fruition of our Community College plan, as liaisons engaged with community colleges, reaching out to Construction Management, Lineman training, and Heavy Equipment Operator classes. The aim is to instill the importance of contacting 811 before digging in those entering the workforce.

November marked our participation in the Urbanna Oyster Festival, engaging with over 50,000 attendees with our 811-display truck. We also sponsored the Richmond Marathon, adding vibrancy to the streets of Richmond as our display truck cheered on the runners.



As we approach the fourth quarter, Virginia 811 shows no signs of slowing down. You can catch the Virginia 811-display truck at upcoming Christmas parades, including Colonial Heights on December 5th, Salem on December 1st, and Roanoke on December 8th.

We're excited about future partnerships and the opportunity to continue serving and safeguarding our community. Thank you for your continued support!

If you have a training or marketing event where you'd like our involvement, don't hesitate to reach out to:

Brian Morehouse
 Manager of Public Awareness
 336-482-6890
 Bmorehouse@va811.com

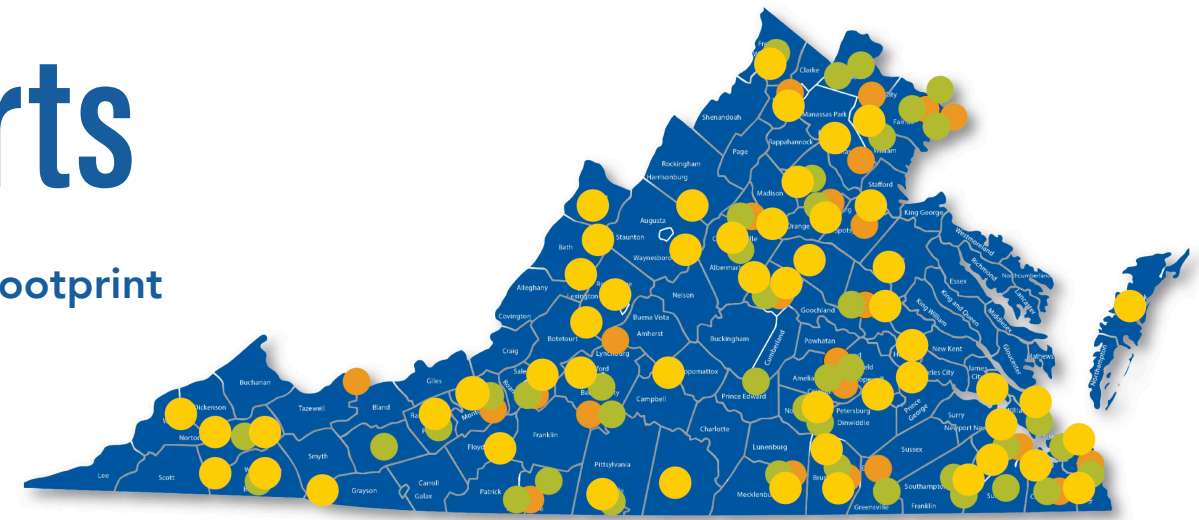
Virginia 811 Public Awareness Efforts

Education, Training, Community, and Display Truck Events

7,482 Individuals Trained YTD

2023 YTD Footprint

- 1st Quarter
- 2nd Quarter
- 3rd Quarter



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|---|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOVEC • Paradigm Meetings • Virginia State Fair • 3L Solutions • Arlington County • Paradigm Meeting • Credle Concrete Inc • WaterJam 2023 VA AWWA • Dominion Energy Training Center • Paradigm- CoRE-EX • Germanna Community College • AINET LLC • Solutions Fiber Optic • Laurel Ridge Community College • Isle of Wight Co Fair 9/14/23-9/17/23 • Wise County Famous Fall Fling • VMDAEC (Girl Power) • State Fair of VA Day #3 Marketing • Rural Fiber • Boy Scout #4321 Fall Fun • UCLS OH Crews • BPM Underground • Precision Underground • Branch 2nd Annual G.I.R.L. Construction Experience • Blue Ridge Community College (Heavy Equipment Operator Class) • Bruce Howard Contracting • Timmons Group • BTR Broadband • VDOT Alberta • C&P Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD Camp Community College (Heavy Equipment Operators Certificate Program) • Charter Communications • Prism Contracting & Engineering • Chesapeake Public Utilities 33rd Annual Safety Program Picnic • Seaford Baptist Church Halloween Festival • Chesapeake Public Utilities Annual Safety Awards Picnic • Southside Virginia Community College Fall Class • City of Chesapeake Public Works • State Fair of Virginia- Day #2 Marketing East Gate • City of Danville • Town of La Crosse • City of Danville Utilities • Utiliquest-NN New Hires • City of Hampton • Virginia Power Solutions Training • City of Hopewell Safety Day Event • Bore 4U • City of Norfolk Department of Utilities • Pipeline Safety Meeting • City of Portsmouth Public Utilities • Primoris Chesapeake Team • City of Winchester • Roanoke Paradigm Meeting • Columbia Gas • SAM- Supervisors • A&J Excavating • Shirley Construction • D&A Utilities LLC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southside Electric Cooperative • Department of Utilities City of Norfolk/Stormwater Mgmt/Water&Sewer • Spectator Enterprises • Diamonds General Contractor • State Fair of VA- Day # 5 Marketing • Ditch Witch • Terra Tech Engineering Services, PC • Abingdon Paradigm Pipeline Meeting • Town of Herndon • Elliott Construction OH • U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers • Elliott OH Crews Work Project 81 • UtiliQuest- Newport News • Fairfax County Public Schools Training • Booth & Associates • Fairfax Professional Center • VDOT Lebanon District • Fiber Expo - Hotel Roanoke • VMDAEC Drone Training • Fiberlight • VRWA Fall Expo • Gannett Fleming • Paradigm- Wise Meeting #1 • Garcia Cable • Piedmont Virginia Community College • 3Q General Membership Meeting-Norfolk • Poquoson Seafood Festival • Hampton Roads Harley Davidson • Primoris • Hampton Roads Mechanical of VA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primoris Supervisors • Heavy Construction Contractors Association • Rappahannock • Henrico County Schools • Rockbridge Community Festival (BARC Electric) • Highland County Fair (BARC Electric) • Salem City Schools 5th Grade Career Fair • HRUHCA Safety Day • Bristol Virginia Utilities • Isle of Wight Co Fair 9/14/23- 9/17/23 • Shenandoah Valley Electric • 4H of Virginia State Fair • Smart Tour Race • J Fletcher Creamer & Son, Inc • South Boston Paradigm Meeting • Eastern Region LDPC Meeting • Southside Virginia Community College Electrical • Kokosing • Southwest VA Region 6 LDPC Meeting • Langley Speedway Trunk or Treat Halloween Festival • Spectrum Contractors • Arlington County WSS • State Fair of VA • LDPC Regional Chairs • State Fair of Virginia • Eastern Region LDPC Meeting • Success Underground • Floyd County Fair • Lightspeed UG • Town of Front Royal • Locator Town Hall | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Hillsboro • Lynchburg Paradigm Meeting • Turf Timber • Marsh Propane • UCLS OH Crew South • Meadowview Park Service • United States Army Corps of Engineers • Mom Prom - St. Judes Hospital Event • Utiliquest - NN • Nelson County Service Authority • Virginia Fire Departments • Asplundh Tree Service • Virginia 811/ANEC • BARC Electric Rockbridge Offices Safety Day • VDOT Coeburn • 2023 Rural Fiber Expo • Virco Construction • Bath County Fair (Barc Electric) • VMDAEC • Paradigm- Lebanon Meeting #2 • VMDAEC Training Center • Black Hydrovac, LLC • Virginia Natural Gas • Blacksburg Paradigm Meeting • Warren County Dept. of Social Services • Paradigm - Palmyra Meeting • Paradigm Presentation- Ruckersville • WSLs Trick or Treat • York County Customs 6th Annual Car Show • Old Dominion Power • Paradigm Meeting |
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2023 Virginia 811 Locator Survey & Town Hall











As part of our strategic plan and in our efforts to find opportunities for continuous improvement, Virginia 811 conducts a stakeholder “town hall process” each year. A different stakeholder group (Excavators/Locators/Utility Operators) is selected annually and asked to provide feedback on their industry and Virginia 811’s processes and technologies.

For 2023, we surveyed our Locator community and conducted the Town Hall to review the results with this community in November.

The survey covered various aspects related to the Locator profession and was aimed at gathering insights into the experiences, challenges, and preferences of individuals working in the industry. Key questions included:

- Locator’s Training Experience
- Duration in the Profession
- Awareness of Virginia 811
- Preferences for Information Channels
- Challenges Faced in Utility Line Locating
- Effective Strategies for Improvement
- Views on the Industry’s Challenges
- Impact of Recent Law Changes on Workflow
- Frequency of Continued Education
- Preferred Reference Resources
- Familiarity with Virginia 811’s Support Channels
- Suggestions for Enhancing Virginia 811’s Training Programs and Initiatives

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS OVERVIEW

-  Various perspectives contribute to a **multifaceted set of recommendations for improving the 811 system.**
-  Respondents highlighted the **importance of maintaining technological advancements in Virginia**, both operationally and in terms of training, to stay ahead of other states.
-  There was a **call for more extensive training on what constitutes an emergency ticket**, as well as efforts to educate excavators on the impact of unnecessary double work requests and the benefits of white lining.
-  **Concerns about not putting in locate requests and the need for effective advertising** were raised, along with a desire to encourage more consistent use of 811 to prevent damages.
-  Participants emphasized the **necessity of state-of-the-art equipment, on-site training with utility owners, and faster mapping updates.**
-  Suggestions for finding solutions for vague ‘Entire Property’ tickets were also presented.
-  Additionally, recommendations included **strengthening homeowner education efforts.**
-  Creation of video shorts for **more concise training**, avoiding placing training requirements on field locate technicians, more localized training, and improving LDPC involvement for stakeholders.
-  The consensus underscored the need for **additional training on how locating works**, and obtaining more specific excavation area information from excavators.
-  Lastly, **questions about the potential conflicts between mandatory white lining and contradictory marking instructions** were posed for consideration.

Thank you to those who participated this year. Your crucial feedback helps lead changes that may improve our processes and further reduce damages to underground utilities.

Explore a more in-depth perspective on the Locator survey questions and findings by visiting:
VA811.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-Locator-Survey-Overview.pdf



Breaking Language Barriers: Insights Into Training Spanish Speakers in Underground Utility Damage Prevention

As the utility industry continues to grow, embracing diversity is crucial for effective training programs. Virginia 811’s Regional Marketing Liaison, **Fernando Mendez**, and Columbia Gas of Virginia’s Damage Prevention Specialist, **Joshua Goss**, shed light on the challenges they face while training Spanish-speaking workers in underground utility damage prevention.

Common Concerns:

Both Joshua and Fernando highlight the two main challenges when initially approaching Spanish-speaking work crews: fear and language barriers. Many workers, they observe, are afraid, often due to misconceptions about their roles and damage prevention messaging. The primary challenge, however, lies in the language barrier. Understanding and addressing these fears becomes integral to effective training.

Misconceptions and Knowledge Gaps

One significant hurdle is the variation in laws concerning underground utilities. Workers outside the U.S. might not encounter the same laws or practices, if at all. For example, in warmer climates, gas lines might be above ground or stored in tanks. The shift to underground fiber optic lines adds another layer of complexity.

Motivating Daily Application

Motivating Spanish-speaking workers to apply their knowledge daily requires a thoughtful approach. Both Joshua and Fernando suggest reinforcing the Virginia 811 message and brand by providing swag items and Spanish language training materials as leave-behinds. But the deeper motivation lies in recognizing the impact of the workers contributions in damage prevention. Being able to recognize and highlight the importance of their role contributes to a culture of responsibility.

Both Fernando’s and Joshua’s experience brings forth several shared key insights and recommendations:

- **The Need for Increased Spanish-Speaking Damage Prevention Personnel:** The population of Spanish-speaking workers is growing, and more outreach is essential, not just for contractors but also for homeowners education.
- **The Importance of Stakeholder Collaboration:** Stakeholders and members must collaborate to extend the reach of the training message.
- **Compromises and Assistance:** Companies should make compromises, providing bilingual resources, time allocation, and assistance in promoting events such as virtual Spanish language LDPC meetings.
- **Status Elevation:** Recognizing workers with underground damage prevention knowledge elevates their status within the industry.

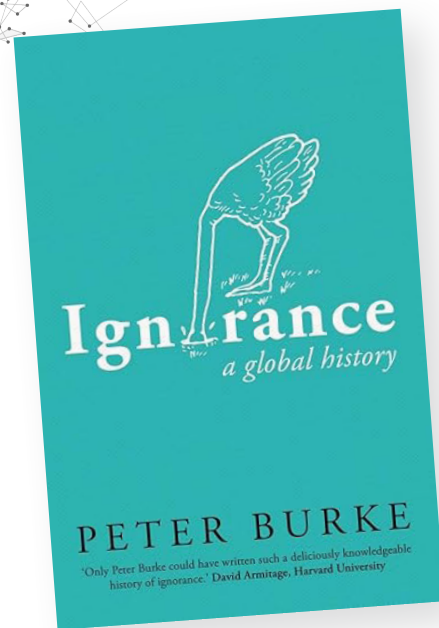
KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE INDUSTRY: A Collaborative Training Approach

The training approach in the industry should adapt to be inclusive by addressing language barriers and unique knowledge gaps. Collaborative efforts, recognition, and strategic planning can transform the training landscape, ensuring a safer and more informed workforce. In the end, the commitment to creating a diverse, knowledgeable, and motivated workforce will define the industry’s success in preventing underground utility damage.

ATTEMPTING TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CHAINS THAT BIND US

Book Review of *Ignorance: A Global History* by Peter Burke

- B. Scott Crawford



Business leaders recognize the importance of data in making informed decisions. In the midst of the Digital Revolution that has allowed for unprecedented amounts of data to be gathered, disaggregated, and interpreted, “data driven” has become one of several technology related ubiquitous catch phrases of the 21st century. Google’s NGRAM Viewer reflects how the term has dramatically grown in use as the Digital Revolution began and continues to unfold (see Image 1), witnessing dramatic increases in use at the turn of the century.

Paradoxically, the technology driving this emphasis on data and “data driven” decisions has increased a level of ignorance within not only business settings but society itself. As the historian Peter Burke notes in his recent work *Ignorance: A Global History*, information overload creates an environment in which “Individuals experience a ‘deluge’ of information and are often unable to select what they want or need, a condition that is also known as ‘filter failure.’” As a result, Burke points out, “our so-called ‘information age’ ‘enables the spread of ignorance just as much as the spread of knowledge.’”

Through the recognition that even in an unprecedented period of data acquisition and availability, allowing individuals to have more access to information than any time in human history, ignorance is still plaguing society, Burke identifies various types of ignorance and explores how ignorance has shaped society, ranging from religion to science, and the consequences of ignorance, ranging from war to business, over the past 500 years. Burke acknowledges that *Ignorance* is meant to serve as a “prologue to a future history,” with his overview of 500 years of ignorance serving as a means to “encourage and orient potential authors of future studies by offering hypotheses for them to test.” The result is a fairly generalized approach to ignorance that at times tends to allow certain political biases on the author’s part to emerge, with desired details to support possible conclusions lacking.

However, this is not to suggest the work is not worth reading. The work is filled with insights related to ignorance that force anyone in business to take pause and reflect on both data driven decisions and organizational practices. Specifically, one section focuses on trade and industry. Within this section, Burke traces the way in which, beginning in the 20th century, smaller businesses increasingly merged into larger ones. The rise of larger businesses resulted in more complex business hierarchies emerging. With more complex hierarchy, “organizational silence” became a new weakness for businesses as knowledge and information failed to flow between layers. Increasingly, workers and management morph into at least two “cultures,” with important information lacking a means to flow between groups. With

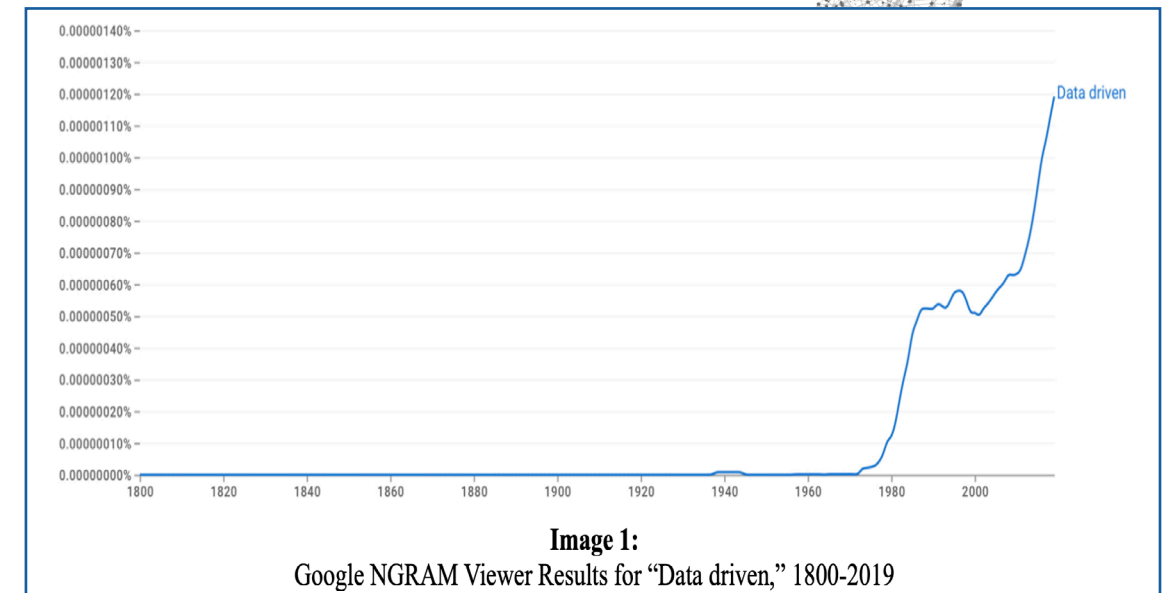


Image 1:
Google NGRAM Viewer Results for “Data driven,” 1800-2019

knowledge and information becoming “sticky,” either not flowing or flowing through filters, ignorance within both groups is strengthened. Business leaders should recognize this and find ways to increase the flow of information and breakdown ignorance at all levels within the company.

Ultimately, there are three broad areas of ignorance students of history should examine and business leaders should recognize. The first is simply not knowing something. Arrogance must be beaten down and business leaders must admit what they do not know and ask questions to find out what information they lack. Second, there is ignorance driven by a desire not to know something. Possibly the leader is fearful of the answers they may learn or is simply not willing to budge on a particular assumption or bias.

This can become a recipe for disaster as needed information is not allowed to be brought forth, resulting in weak, even damaging, decisions being made. Finally, there is ignorance related to holding onto knowledge and information due to not wanting others to know something. This occurs as possibly business leaders are reluctant to be transparent, leading to a lack of trust and possibly rumors that fuel misinformation within the company.

While highly generalized, lacking some desired details to better support conclusions, Peter Burke’s *Ignorance* is a timely work. It is easy to fall into the intellectual trap of thinking that with so much data and information we are highly informed and able to make strong decisions, even better decisions than those that have lived before us. This work reminds us, referencing events spanning 500 years, that this is not the case and that our society, and our businesses, are as ignorant as ever. Possibly our ignorance is in a different form as now we are inundated with information, but ignorance still exists, and to think otherwise, can lead businesses in a direction that could prove, well, disastrous.

