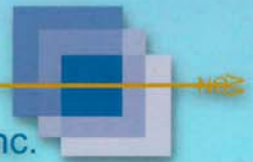


Mississippi One-Call

acts

inc.



Second Quarter 2008



Mississippi One-Call

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page 3

They're driving me nuts!
page 12

Three ways to be a
Magnet for Business
page 27

PRSR STD
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Paid
Little Rock, AR
Permit No. 1357



from the desk of

Sam Johnson...

As many of you are aware, the new law requiring all owners/operators of underground facilities to be a member of Mississippi One-Call went into effect July 1, 2008. It has been encouraging to see so many of you working hard to comply with the new law and effective date. More utility companies are signing up daily, and I assure you that our One-Call team will continue to work diligently with you to ensure a smooth transition. On behalf of the board of directors and our entire staff, I welcome you aboard.

Preventing damages, minimizing disruptions to our infrastructure, and keeping the environment safer for all citizens are our goals. Membership in Mississippi One-Call moves us one step closer to achieving these goals.

Our commitment to providing a first class, cost effective service to all members drives us to take advantage of the technological advances in mapping, transmission of data, or how to take a ticket that is less disruptive for you. As important as these technological advances are, I remained convinced that the best way to make a difference in preventing damages is our commitment to listen to your perspectives and ideas. It's about partnership and trust.

A meaningful partnership begins with respect and the desire to better understand the other points of view. It is in this spirit that The Summit was developed. The Summit is a forum where stakeholders can share information and perspectives and work together on all aspects of damage prevention issues. I trust you'll find a way to be part of this unique and first annual event to visibly support damage prevention in Mississippi. Look for information in this issue outlining the event in Tunica, scheduled this year on November 17 – 19. Go to the Mississippi One-Call website and click on the Summit logo to register on line.

The Mississippi State Damage Prevention Program Committee (MSDPPC) is scheduled to meet September 11, 2008, to further address Congress's recently passed HR 5782 which requires all states to develop more effective damage prevention programs. The meeting will focus on developing a process to promote active participation by all stakeholders in public education, training for all stakeholders, and consideration of additional proposed legislation in future sessions. Such meetings promote partnership and often cause a shift in thinking that can remove us from our comfort zone.

It is past time we put our heads together to develop a measurable and effective damage prevention plan. Of course we don't know all the answers, but the willingness to sit down and discuss the possibilities opens the door for new and innovative solutions to yesterday's frustrations. And that can be a good thing.

Let me know what you think.

*Sam Johnson
Executive Director
Mississippi One-Call System, Inc.*



You are here!



do you
know
what's
down
here?



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

on the cover...

Freddie Gurley, Area Supervisor for UtiliQuest, locates an AT&T phone line on the University of Mississippi campus as work nears completion for the Presidential Debate to be held September 26th.

Mississippi One-Call



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Letters, comments, and articles are encouraged and can be submitted to:

Mississippi One-Call ACTS
email: ms1call@aligningchange.com





The debate starts here

The Damage Prevention Coordinators would like to invite contractors, utilities, county and city governments to participate in Damage Prevention Coordination Council Meetings in 2008. Through the damage prevention meetings and programs such as courtesy stops, we can build a partnership to reduce damages and make a safer work place for us all.

If you are interested in attending a DPCC meeting or having one of the Damage Prevention Coordinators conduct a safety meeting for your employees or organization, please contact the Mississippi One-Call Center or your local Damage Prevention Coordinator.

North Mississippi
Jerry Kennemur 662-415-2904
jkennemur@comcast.net

Central Mississippi
Henry Greer 601-942-2106
HGreer634@cs.com

South Mississippi
Phil Davis – 601-668-6411
calone48@bellsouth.net

Mississippi One-Call System, Inc.

Markerboard Report

5258 Cedar Park Dr.
Jackson, MS 39206
601-362-4332
www.ms1call.org

Signs on the Mississippi University campus proclaim “The Debate Starts Here.” The signs refer to the 2008 Presidential Debate between John McCain and Barak Obama, on the Ole Miss campus, September 26th.

However, the debate, or rather, the work in preparation for it, actually starts with Mississippi

One-Call. Many construction and landscaping projects are currently under way on campus and in the city. The work, initiated by the Secret Service, the University and the city of Oxford has generated a large volume of notices to the center over the past several months.

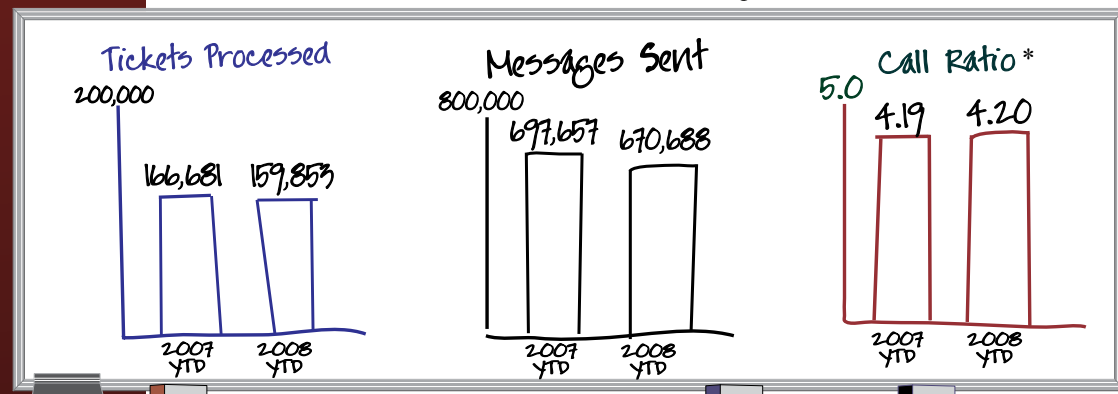
One of the projects involves the construction of a 7000’ fence around the Ford Center for Performing Arts, where the debate will take place. The work also includes the installation of a new fiber optic communication cable for the more than 3000 reporters and journalists expected to cover the event.

Ole Miss is a member of Mississippi One-Call and most all the locate requests are made by Morris Horn, Head Plumber, for the Ole Miss General Maintenance Department. “I call in about 99% of the tickets for the work on campus,” Horn said. “No one does any work without a locate number and that includes private contractors. There’s just too much at stake.”



Morris Horn, University of Mississippi (left) and Freddie Gurley, UtiliQuest, check the progress on the 7000’ security fence on the Ole Miss campus.

Call Center Operations 2007 - 2008 Year to Date Comparative



* Call ratio is an average of the number of utilities notified per incoming call.

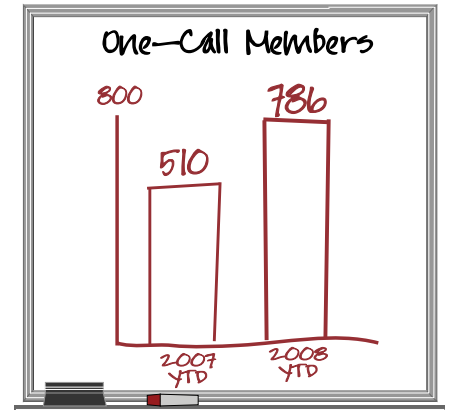


Welcome New Mississippi One-Call Members

A C L Water Assoc., Inc
A. S. L. Water Association
Acadia Oaks Utilities
Algoma Water
Arnold Line Water Assoc.
Bellegrass Utilities
Belmont Water Assoc. Inc.
Belmor Lakes Utility
Beulah Hubbard Water Association
Big Field Water Assoc.
Bleakhouse Water Assoc.
Blue Springs Water
Bluff Creek Mobile Home Park
Boggan Ridge Rural Water Assoc. Inc
Bogue Chitto Water Assoc.
Boswell Regional Center
Brazil Sumner Water Assoc., Inc
Briar Creek Utilities
Cadaretta Water Assoc.
Caledonia Energy Partners, LLC
Calvary Rural Water Association
Canebrake Utilities
Carson Central Water Assoc.

Casey Jones Water Assoc.
Cason Water District
Castalian Water Assoc.
Cedar Grove Harmony Water
Chalybeate Water Association
City of Calhoun City
City of Carthage
City Of Corinth Sewer Dept.
City of Drew
City of Forest
City Of Greenwood Public Works
City of Hernando
City of Leland
City of Lexington
City of Morton
City of Ocean Springs
City of Pearl
City of Quitman
City of Raymond
Coahoma Community College & AHS
Coahoma EPA
College Hill Water Assoc.
Coontail Water Association, Inc
Copiah Water Association, Inc
Corinth Housing Authority
Cypress Creek Water Assoc. Inc
Dancy Water Association, Inc
Decatur Telephone
Deeson Round Lake Water Corp
Delta EPA
Denbury Onshore, LLC
Desoto Lake Water Association

Dexter Water Association
Eagle Lake Water District
East Chickasaw Water Assoc.
East End Water Association
East Pontotoc Water Assoc.
Eastabuchie Utility Assoc.
Eureka Water Association
F & H Utilities
Fernwood Water & Sewerage Assoc.
Flint Creek Utility Assoc., Inc
Gaines Trace Water District
Golden Triangle Water Assoc.
Greenfield Water Assoc., Inc
Hebron Water Assoc.
Hiwanne Water Assoc., Inc
Holcut Cairo Water Assoc.
Homestead Water Association
Horn Lake Water Assoc.
Houston Estates Utility Co.



Emergency locate requests by text message



Mississippi One-Call continues to offer member companies the option to receive **emergency only** locate information by text message on your cellular phone. This service is available any time an emergency locate is taken in your area. This is also in addition to your regular ticket receiving system. This option has been added to aid companies that are operating with only one or two people. We are aware that those operators are often busy in the field and may not know that they have received an emergency locate by email or fax. We believe this feature will aid those members in being able to locate emergency job sites in a timely manner to ensure the protection of their underground facilities. There will be no additional charges for this service from Mississippi One-Call, however your cellular carrier may charge you a per text message fee. If you are interested in this service please contact the GIS department at 601-368-1150.

View and update your database online

Mississippi One-Call member companies are taking advantage of the ability to verify and update their underground facility locations online. The service is called, Member Service Area Web Mapping and will allow you to verify your database at any time without having to contact us for your database map. It will also eliminate the need for updating your database on paper maps. If you would like to take advantage of this free service, contact the GIS Department at 601-368-1150.



Mississippi One-Call

pro files

The Mississippi One-Call
professionals
working for you



Amanda Russell
GIS/ Database Coordinator



Chas Sample
Center Supervisor

- **How long have you worked for Mississippi One-Call?** 12 years. I was a CSR for 3 years and I have been GIS Manager for 9 years.
- **What do you like most about your job?** I like that it is challenging.
- **What do you like the least about your job?** I don't have an answer for this question. I like GIS work.
- **My all time favorite or memorable locate request was ...** When a lady wanted to dig up her dead dog to make a coat. I think its safe to say I was being pranked.
- **Where is your hometown?** Harrisville, MS.
- **Folks who know me would say that I am...** Tenacious. I don't give up on things easily.
- **How do you spend your spare time?** With my husband and two children.
- **What quality do you like most about yourself?** I am very independent.
- **What do you least like about yourself?** I am too impatient.
- **What kind of music do you listen to?** Alternative, Pop, Rock a little bit of everything.
- **What is your favorite movie?** The Breakfast Club.
- **What was the last book you read?** Phantoms by Dean Koontz.
- **When I was little, I wanted to be ...** A mermaid.
- **What is the most important lesson you have learned?** Not to let people take advantage of me.
- **Who has had the greatest impact on your life?** My daughter.

- **How long have you worked for Mississippi One-Call?** 10 Years.
- **What do you like most about your job?** The Family atmosphere.
- **What do you like the least about your job?** I really can't think of anything that I dislike about my job.
- **My all time favorite or memorable locate request was ...** I had a couple that called. The wife couldn't hear and the husband couldn't see. They were a lot of fun to work with. I had to call the ticket number out to the husband and the wife would write it down.
- **Where is your hometown?** Jackson, MS.
- **Folks who know me would say that I am...** A kind person that is willing to help and listen to their problems.
- **How do you spend your spare time?** With my family just having fun like going to the movies and the mall.
- **What quality do you like most about yourself?** I think that I am a very open person, BUT don't push me.
- **What do you least like about yourself?** I love myself, but I do wish that I were a little taller.
- **What kind of music do you listen to?** Gospel and R&B.
- **What is your favorite movie?** The Wiz and The Incredible Shrinking Woman.
- **What was the last book you read?** Caught in the Mix.
- **When I was little, I wanted to be ...** I wanted to be a Typewriter because my Mother was a secretary.
- **What is the most important lesson you have learned?** To always treat people the way you want to be treated.
- **Who has had the greatest impact on your life?** My mother, family, and life would not be without my GOD.



by Mark McCarver

Pipeline ROW: Serious Business

In the interest of public safety, care of pipeline right-of-ways is ongoing. Pipeline companies follow a variety of procedures, including frequent inspection and a regular brush clearing program to minimize the risk of hazardous action by others. Damage to a gas pipeline could result in serious property damage and personal injuries.

A pipeline ROW is inspected regularly. Foot patrols require access to check right-of-way conditions, to test for potential leaks, to install and maintain markers and signs, to examine the corrosion protection system and to clear brush to keep the right-of-way accessible. In addition, the pipeline ROW is patrolled by air to monitor use and activities and to locate areas that may require maintenance.

There is no question but that one of the greatest concerns in pipeline safety for the operator, regulator, excavator and the general public is right-of-way encroachment. Statistics consistently show that third party damage is responsible for many of our pipeline failures and can be costly and dangerous to all who are in the vicinity of pipelines. I recently read about such an incident and court case in our neighboring state of Alabama.

During a routine aerial patrol, a pipeline pilot spotted a large concrete structure near the buried pipeline. He

immediately notified company personnel on the ground. When the employee responded, he noticed a concrete embankment was being installed on the pipeline right-of-way. This construction was being done without the company's knowledge. It was also noted that within sight of the construction was a pipeline marker and also a "Do Not Dredge" sign.

It was later determined that neither the landowner nor the contractor notified the One-Call Center regarding their intent to dig. When the employee attempted to explain the prohibition and dangers associated with excavating on a company ROW and the significance of the state's One Call law to the landowner, he became somewhat belligerent and insisted he could do whatever he wanted.

This incident was referred to the County District Attorney who prosecuted the case. During the hearing with the landowner and contractor, the Assistant District Attorney stressed that the "pipeline has a zero tolerance for encroachments" and the liability of such encroachments. A company representative explained the DOT/PHMSA requirements and all the efforts taken by the pipeline company to protect the pipeline, which in turn protects the public and also the environment. The final result was that the landowner and

contractor were fined \$5000.00, which was split between them.

It was obvious to me that the District Attorney clearly understood the importance and seriousness of the One-Call laws and by prosecuting this case sent the message that encroachments that create damage or even possible damage to utilities will not be tolerated.

Clearly the majority of our excavating community and property owners involved in working around right-of-ways make better decisions than the one just identified. Most recognize the benefits of "call before you dig" and comply with the One-Call law because of the obvious benefits to all involved.

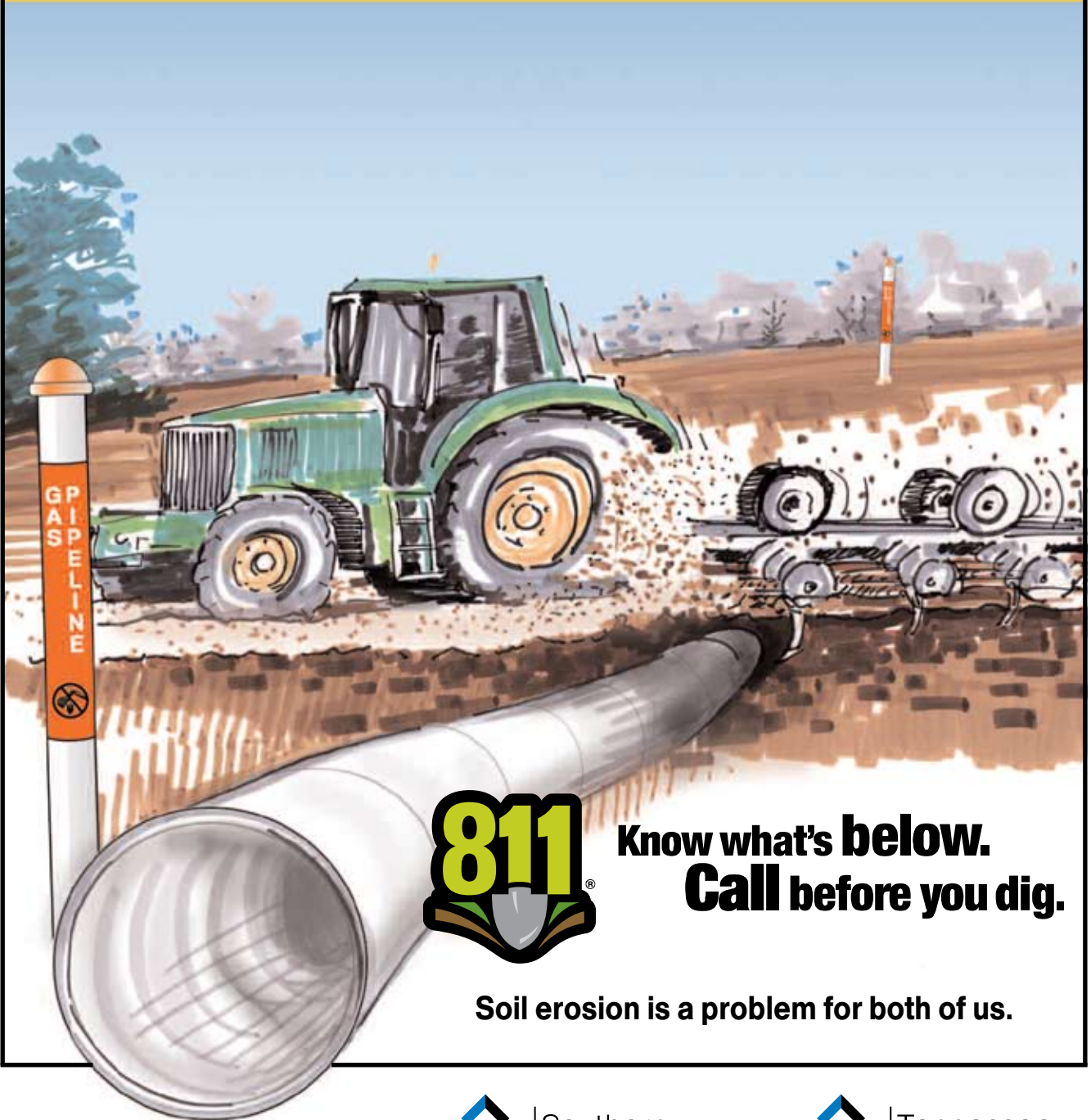
However, I am convinced that if more prosecutions like this from around the country were publicized, it would have a very positive effect on One-Call notification and third party damage and especially for those who choose to ignore the potential catastrophic consequences of the damages caused by willful disregard of "calling before you dig" and "digging safely."

Let's work together to keep Mississippi a safer place to work and live. ☐

Mark McCarver is the Director of the Pipeline Safety Division of the Mississippi Public Service Commission.



America's Farmers...
The best in the world. Thank You.
We want to keep you running safe.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Soil erosion is a problem for both of us.



Monday, November 17

Summit Golf Tournament

Tee time 10:00am
Cottonwoods
Cost is \$85.00

“Competent Person” Certification

Instructor – David Dow, TrenchSafety
9:00am – 5:00pm
Cost is \$85.00

Meet and Greet

6:00pm – 8:00pm
Harrah’s Convention Center

**Some of the confirmed training topics for
Tuesday, 18 and Wednesday, 19**

CGA update – Khrysanne Kerr, Program Chair CGA
Understanding the One-Call Law – Sam Johnson, Executive Director,
Mississippi One-Call
Media Relations – Robert Leslie, Atmos Energy
Upcoming legislative changes – MSDPPC Co-Chairmen
Building effective relationships – Jerry Wilson, ACTS
Understanding the theory of locating underground facilities –
Janet Webster, Ditch Witch
Effective damage investigations – Bo Womack, Gulf area Manager,
Utiliquist
Understanding the damage claims process – Scott Whitener & John Allen,
AT&T Risk Management
Maximizing employee potential – Dr. Larry Cole, TeamMax
Asset Management – Jeff Ballweber, Pickering Inc.
One picture is worth a thousand dollars – Randy Smith, ACTS
Breaking down the 9 elements of an effective damage prevention program
Roger Cox, ACTS



damage prevention
Summit
A CGA REGIONAL EVENT

Why attend

**To bring stakeholders to
share ideas**

**To promote excavation
& protection of underground
infrastructure**

**To share information on
trends and technologies**

**To take advantage to valuable
networking opportunities**

**To interact in expert-led training
sessions**

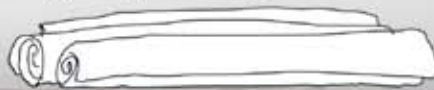
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damage prevention
summit
A CGA REGIONAL EVENT

Harrah's Tunica Convention Center
November 17-19, 2008
Tunica, MS

Bringing together stakeholders
for Mississippi's first annual
damage prevention summit

www.aligningchange.com



The Summit: Mississippi's new damage prevention tool

Water, gas, electricity and telecommunications are vital to our everyday lives. Protecting the underground facilities that ensure we have these resources is our shared responsibility.

The Mississippi Damage Prevention Summit brings all the industry stakeholders together from across the state to promote excavation safety and the protection of our underground infrastructure. It is an opportunity to network with others in the industry to find answers to the tough questions.

The first annual Mississippi One-Call Damage Prevention Summit will be held November 17-19, 2008 in Tunica, Mississippi and is designed to provide safety education, certification training and a look at the latest technology for underground excavation.

Among the highlights of this year's conference are:

Certification class for "Competent Person" Training: OSHA requires that a "Competent Person" be on your construction or maintenance site whenever workers are exposed in an excavation. Applied to trenching or excavation operations, the Competent Person (CP) must have specific training and be knowledgeable of the requirements of the standard, soils analysis, and use of protective systems. In addition, the CP must have authority to take immediate corrective measures to eliminate unsafe conditions. TrenchSafety's Competent Person Training Program is designed to help you meet OSHA's training requirements.

Each student receives an instructional workbook (which serves as a valuable reference later) and a wallet card and certificate from NUCA indicating successful completion of the class. The all day certification class is \$85.00 and includes the workbooks and certificates.

Training classes for first responders, contractors and underground facility owners (gas, electric, water, wastewater and telecommunications lines) and utility locators: These training sessions will be expert led. The sessions are designed to help us search of solutions, rather than just provide them.

Our search for answers may lead us to conclude that we need more training, more effective messages, or changes in the workforce. Sometimes we determine that we cannot get to where we want to be by ourselves. We need effective partnerships to achieve our goals.

This is certainly true for those of us involved in damage prevention – the protecting of underground utilities, the excavator, and the citizens of Mississippi. Damage prevention is not the sole responsibility of one organization, nor can it be achieved by a

Pipeline Safety is Everyone's Responsibility



**Call Before You Dig or Dredge. It's the Law.
Contact the Mississippi One-Call Center at
1-800-227-6477**

**In Case of an Emergency Involving Shell Pipeline,
Call our 24-Hour Emergency Number at 1-800-922-3459.**



This Public Safety Message is provided by Shell Pipeline Company LP.



proud sponsor of the
**damage prevention
summit**

**Colonial Pipeline
Company**

An average of 100 million gallons of gasoline, kerosene, home heating oil, diesel and national defense fuel safely flow through Colonial's pipeline system 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Colonial Pipeline Company delivers liquid petroleum products to the state of Mississippi as a vital part of the supply chain. Think of Colonial the next time you fill your car, use an airplane, or heat your home with petroleum.

Visit our website. www.colpipe.com

Colonial Pipeline Company



Call before you dig.
Nationwide



DISCOVER OUR NEW CONNECTION

THE PIPELINE GROUP PROMISE

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Facilitating Trust and Safety Between the Public and the Pipeline



AN OUTSTANDING PACKAGE OF SERVICES

The Pipeline Group's comprehensive package of services can make it easier for your company to comply with government regulations. Our product lineup includes:

- Emergency response liaison programs
- Excavation awareness programs
- Direct mail notification
- Landowner/Farmer education programs
- Public awareness plan consultation
- Additional resources for stakeholders




Managing Beyond Compliance

single entity. We are learning that it can only be achieved through cooperation, communication, and coordination among all of us involved in the industry.

How do we build an effective damage prevention program? There is no simple answer. When it comes to damage prevention, we all know where we would like to be, but we have different ideas on how to get there and it's easy for us to see what everyone else should be doing.

An exhibit hall with more than 50 exhibitors offering a look at the latest equipment and tools of the trade. We have scheduled several events in the exhibit hall to allow time to get to know those who are supporting your efforts in the state.

Where are we and how do we get to where we want to be? For most organizations or businesses, those are important questions. Finding the right answers is equally important, but often it is a difficult and, at times, a seemingly impossible process. While most of us understand where we are, it is the "getting to where we want to be" that often frustrates us.

Looking for answers to the difficult questions is the primary motivation behind the creation of the latest tool in Mississippi One-Call's damage prevention toolbox, the Summit. 

Excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude. *Ralph Marston*
Sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can.
Richard Bach



A full service company

sales service parts rentals delivery



31 North Madison Dr., Three Way, TN 38343, ph.731.784.4800
1408 D.L. Collums Dr., Tupelo, MS 38801, ph. 662.844.7373
3849 New Getwell Rd., Memphis, TN 38118, ph. 901.365.1180
2103 Ritter Rd., La Vergne, TN 37086, ph. 615.793.7184

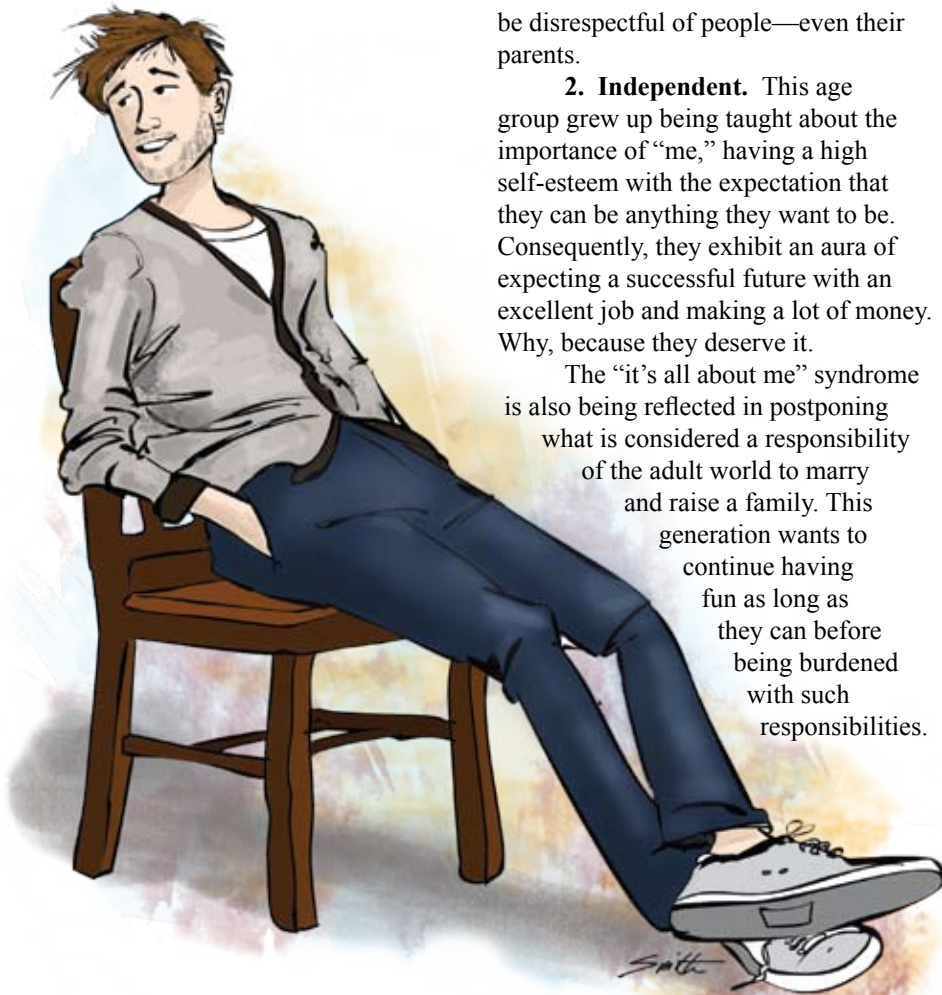
Who are these people?

by Dr. Larry Cole

From where did these people come? They look different with tattoos all over their bodies and pierced jewelry in their nose, tongue and “other places” that seem a bit strange. And, they act differently.

These are the younger generation born after 1985 typically referred to as Generation Y or the Millennials. These younger people constitute today’s younger talent pool. You’re excited about that right?

I encourage you to read a fascinating book by Jean Twenge, Ph.D. titled **Generation Me**. Twenge summarizes her research with this age group along with other published studies. It’s a fascinating read and this article highlights several key findings that apply to the work environment.



1. Different is good. This generation was born into the world where appreciating diversity is the rule rather than the exception. The constant stream of advertisements encourages consumers to consider the reality that “different is good so buy me.” This generation is simply expressing the message that the “older adult” world has been teaching them—different is good. Consequently, their physical appearance and behaviors constitute an expression of their difference.

Living this difference is not always good. The incidence of narcissism or the focus on self at the expense of the lack of empathy for others is reported to be at an all-time high with this generation. But, again, this generation is living with “pop cultures” that reinforce the notion to be disrespectful of people—even their parents.

2. Independent. This age group grew up being taught about the importance of “me,” having a high self-esteem with the expectation that they can be anything they want to be. Consequently, they exhibit an aura of expecting a successful future with an excellent job and making a lot of money. Why, because they deserve it.

The “it’s all about me” syndrome is also being reflected in postponing what is considered a responsibility of the adult world to marry and raise a family. This generation wants to continue having fun as long as they can before being burdened with such responsibilities.

3. Work ethic. The complaint is this age group does not exhibit the work ethic of previous generations. The fact is this generation wants a balanced life. They don’t want to be defined by their careers. Their independence streak is also quickly evidenced when working for you doesn’t turn work to their satisfaction, they leave. They were looking for a job when they found the one they have and they can find another one when needed.

4. Listen to me. Accompanying this “me” attitude is the expectation that they have the right to express their opinion and they expect you to listen to understand their points of view and use them because “I said so.” The bottom line is that they expect collaboration rather than you to exercise your authority.

5. Mental health. You may be surprised to learn that in spite of growing up thinking the world centers around their wants and wishes, research shows this age group experiences more anxiety than previous generations and depression is just a way of life. In fact the incident rate of depression is estimated to be at least 10 – 15% higher than previous generations and some studies report as high as 50%. This generation has learned to expect instant gratification and when their high expectations hit the “real world” there is a clash. Competition to enter some universities is keen and many do not get their first choice. Realizing they are not getting rich and probably won’t achieve the standard of living enjoyed by their parents take its toll. The bottom line is that there are many sources of emotional pressures to contend with and many feel overwhelmed.

Editors Note: This is the first in a series of four articles regarding working with generation Y employees. This series was requested by an employer in the damage prevention industry.

Larry Cole, Ph.D. founded TeamMax®, Inc. and the TeamMax® methodologies to improve employee performance to maximize financial success.

Mississippi One-Call

Your damage prevention
resource center

ms1call.org



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Steps for becoming a member of Mississippi One-Call



The new law requiring membership in Mississippi One-Call went into effect July 1, 2008. Becoming a member of Mississippi One-Call is probably easier than you thought. You can follow the steps below, or just give us a call. We are here to help you make the experience a good one.

1 *You need two (2) forms to get started.* They are the Application for Membership and the Membership Set-Up Form. Ask your Damage Prevention Coordinator for the forms, download them from our website at www.ms1call.org or request them from Jessica Causey at 601-362-4322.

2 *Fill out and return the completed forms along with your database information to Mississippi One-Call System (MOCS).* Your database can be submitted in one of the following three ways: 1. By drawing the location of your underground facilities on a paper map, 2. as a digital file (AutoCad files, ArcView files, etc.), 3. or as a list of GPS readings.

3 *MOCS will build your database and send you a copy for your review and approval along with a database agreement.* Check the copy of your database for accuracy and notify MOCS of any changes that need to be made. Sign and return the database agreement.

4 *Your membership will then be activated.* MOCS will send you a TEST locate request and call your office to make sure it was received. You will then begin receiving real locate requests as excavations take place near and around your underground facilities.

Notify MOCS of any changes that need to be made to your database as new lines are added to your underground system. The law requires your database to be updated or verified on an annual basis, but of course, the best reason is that you want to protect that new facility you've just buried.

Also notify MOCS if any of your contact information changes (name, phone numbers, email or address changes). We want to make sure that we can contact the right person and it will be especially important to you should you have an after hours emergency.

If you need assistance or have questions contact the GIS Department at 601-368-1150 or your Damage Prevention Coordinator (North - Jerry Kennemur 662-415-2904, Central - Henry Greer 601-942-2106 or South - Phil Davis 601-668-6411).

Life isn't about waiting out the storm, it's about learning to dance in the rain.
Erin Lee Wescott

A more successful project

Simple is a word that causes heads to turn and ears to open, especially when it involves achieving success. Simple is good. Simple is what we want, but simple is not what we expect. Simple is a victim of scarcity.

In the complex world of excavating, simple is a word rarely used to describe any aspect of the business. Most bidding processes are far from simple and just about every job involves a complex sequence of events that require constant attention to keep crews and equipment working safely and profitably. *(continued on page 16)*



Guaranteed!



But, when someone says, “it’s simple,” we want to believe it, even if we know better.

How can a company avoid downtime from damages and increase profits? “It’s simple,” said Mike Whitley, Project Superintendent, ARGO Construction Corporation. “Its communications. That’s all there

is to it.” Now, why would a veteran of the construction business say that anything is simple? The answer is simple – he tried it and it works.

ARGO Construction Corporation is headquartered in Cordova, Tennessee, but spends a lot of time and money in Mississippi constructing water, sewer, and gas lines for a number of municipalities and utility companies, especially in Desoto County, one of fastest growing in the nation.

Whitley is responsible for contacting Mississippi One-Call to give advanced notice for the jobs in the state. The resulting notices are transmitted to those who may have underground facilities in conflict with the work. These notices, or tickets, eventually reach the hands of those who locate

and mark the approximate route of affected lines, pipes, or cables.

One such utility locator has received a lot of tickets involving ARGO. Freddie Gurley, Area Supervisor for UtiliQuest, has walked many miles and painted a lot of ground because of tickets called in by Whitley. What kind of relationship do they have? “We have a great relationship, because we know what each other needs,” said Gurley. “We simply (there’s that word again) stay in touch. If I need help, I know he’ll answer the phone. I think he feels the same about me.”

Communications between excavators and utility locators have changed over the past several years. Technology has helped in some respect. “There was a time when all we had was the pay phone,” said Gurley. “Cell phones have changed the way we do business.”

There is another reason communications have increased. “There’s no good ground left,” said Whitley. “Builders are developing land that is difficult to excavate and right-of-ways are congested. Under these conditions, utility damages are more likely and cuts cost us, even if we’re not at fault. It shuts us down.” For this reason, ARGO, like most successful companies places a premium on utility locators, who are also called damage prevention specialists.

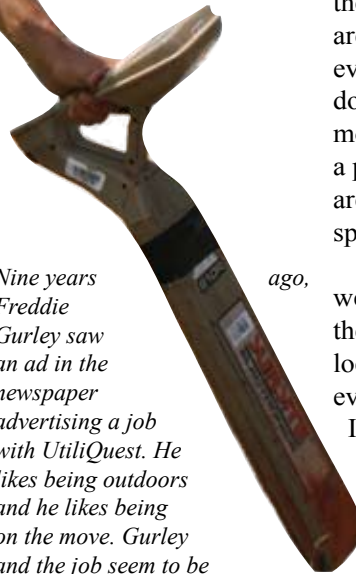
“We all have a job to do and we can’t do ours if they can’t do theirs, why would I want to make the locator’s job harder by not giving him everything he needs?” said Whitley. “

In real life and money, that’s pretty important.”

Simple is also not a word that describes most locate requests, especially those involving ARGO. “If it is a gravity sewer project, I’ll call in requests as the job progresses,” said Whitley. “But for other projects, I’ll call in the whole job because we need the flexibility of moving around. I expect the job foreman to stay in communication with the locators. ”



Nine years ago, Freddie Gurley saw an ad in the newspaper advertising a job with UtiliQuest. He likes being outdoors and he likes being on the move. Gurley and the job seem to be made for each other. His office is in Batesville and he is the supervisor of a nine county region in north Mississippi.





ARGO Project Superintendent, Mike Whitley started working for a construction company when he was 16 years old. He's been with ARGO for 16 years.

Gurley said he isn't troubled by the size or scope of a ticket, if he can communicate with the contractor. "If it's a big project, I like to meet them on site and determine what they need to get started and what they'll need to keep moving." Gurley likes to stay in touch and gives his cell number to every contractor. We can keep them working, if they'll just let us know what they need."


For smaller jobs, another form of communication keeps the locator informed. Gurley said that white paint answers a lot of questions. White marking the work site is not required in Mississippi, however, according to Gurley, "When it's marked, there is no doubt. We know exactly what the excavator wants."

Contrary to popular belief, white paint or flags doesn't just help the locator. If, because the site is marked in white, a locator saves 10 minutes per locate on say, 10 locates, that's a savings of nearly two hours a day. Who benefits from an extra two hours

of locating? The answer is simple - the excavator!

"If a locator has to guess about anything on the ticket, he's not doing me much good. I call in locates from engineering plans and I know that sometimes a verbal description of the work is confusing. White paint is good, but there is nothing better than meeting on-site. The foreman can put his foot on the ground and say I going from here to there."

Most all projects have built in challenges. Many of the obstacles, such as weather, soil conditions and breakdowns, are beyond anyone's control. While these conditions will test our skills and our patience, the greatest obstacle to a successful project will always be a lack of communication or cooperation with everyone involved.

Learning the effective art of communication will guarantee a more successful project. And better than that, it puts more money in our pockets. By anyone's definition, that's a more successful project, guaranteed! 

Certification Corner



Test your knowledge of Mississippi's damage prevention law.

1. **The accuracy of marking underground facilities is:**
 - A. 24 inches either side of the mark
 - B. 12 inches either side of the mark
 - C. 18 inches either side of the mark
 - D. Depends on the utility type
2. **If a renewal is required for a project, the notification must be made to Mississippi One-Call:**
 - A. At least 2 days prior to expiration date
 - B. At least 3 days prior to expiration date
 - C. You can just talk to the locator without calling Mississippi One-Call
 - D. At least 2 working days prior to the expiration date
3. **Pink is the color code for:**
 - A. Reclaimed water
 - B. Temporary survey markings
 - C. Proposed excavation
 - D. Slurry
4. **The underground utility markings shall be valid for a period of:**
 - A. 10 days
 - B. Until markings are no longer visible
 - C. 8 days
 - D. 10 working days
5. **The new law requiring all owners/operators of underground facilities to become members of Mississippi One-Call became effective:**
 - A. January 1, 2009
 - B. July 1, 2008
 - C. July 1, 2009



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. – *Albert Einstein*

There is not security on this earth, only opportunity. – *Douglas MacArthur*

Answers: 1.C, 2.D, 3.B, 4.D, 5.B

MSDPCC commits to damage prevention

Shortly after Congress passed the PIPES Act in December 2006, a group interested in keeping Mississippi informed about the changes in Federal legislation met to discuss the impact of the new legislation at the state level. The group represented both regulated and non regulated utilities.

The Nine Elements of a stronger damage prevention program as outlined in this issue were presented to all in attendance. An enthusiastic debate followed as potential responses to the legislation were discussed. It was obvious early on in the first meeting that in spite of differences around the table, the common bond was that if a significant difference was to be made for all stakeholders, it would be made through a strong partnership. Strong partnerships recognize the value of understanding and respecting different perspectives. Such was the commitment of this group.

The Mississippi State Damage Prevention Program Committee (MSDPPC) was formed in May 2007. The initial challenge was to identify the key stakeholders and interested parties across the state. Following much discussion, there was almost unanimous consent to move forward in developing Mississippi's response to the new federal legislation.

The Committee's vision statement is "to create a positive environment for all Mississippi's damage prevention industry's stakeholders to find creative and effective damage prevention solutions."

Their adopted mission statement is "to help protect the integrity of utility infrastructure by promoting effective damage prevention as a shared responsibility to insure that all people in Mississippi live and work in a safer and cleaner environment."

The Committee met last September with a group of interested individuals to discuss ways to make the current damage prevention law more effective. Requiring all owners/operators of underground facilities to be

(continued on page 21)



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Call before you dig.**

To locate and mark buried utility gas, electric, cable and telephone lines, call 811 at least two business days before digging begins. It's safe, it's free and it's the law.

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Nine Elements impact the entire industry

From the contractor to the water system owner/operator and from the traditional utility company to the contract locator, all are going to be impacted by passage of the 2006 PIPES Act.

It is vitally important to understand that changes to our damage prevention program are going to be proposed at the state level or mandated from the federal level. The best way to understand the impact of the new law is to involve yourself in meetings and sessions focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of any proposed change and that promotes understanding all perspectives involved in the damage prevention process.

The following 9 elements are found in the Act and contain language and incentives to encourage states to strengthen their underground utility safety and damage prevention programs.

1) Participation by operators, excavators, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of methods for establishing and maintaining effective communications between stakeholders from receipt of an excavation notification until successful completion of the excavation, as appropriate.

(2) A process for fostering and ensuring the support and partnership of stakeholders, including excavators, operators, locators, designers, and local government in all phases of the program.

(3) A process for reviewing the adequacy of a pipeline operator's internal performance measures regarding persons performing locating services and quality assurance programs.

(4) Participation by operators, excavators, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of effective employee training programs to ensure that operators, the one-call center, the enforcing agency, and the excavators have partnered to design and implement training for the employees of operators, excavators, and locators.

(5) A process for fostering and ensuring active participation by all stakeholders in public education for damage prevention activities.


(6) A process for resolving disputes that defines the State authority's

role as a partner and facilitator to resolve issues.

(7) Enforcement of State damage prevention laws and regulations for all aspects of the damage prevention process, including public education, and the use of civil penalties for violations assessable by the appropriate State authority.

(8) A process for fostering and promoting the use, by all appropriate

stakeholders, of improving technologies that may enhance communications, underground pipeline locating capability, and gathering and analyzing information about the accuracy and effectiveness of locating programs.

(9) A process for review and analysis of the effectiveness of each program element, including a means for implementing improvements identified by such program reviews. 

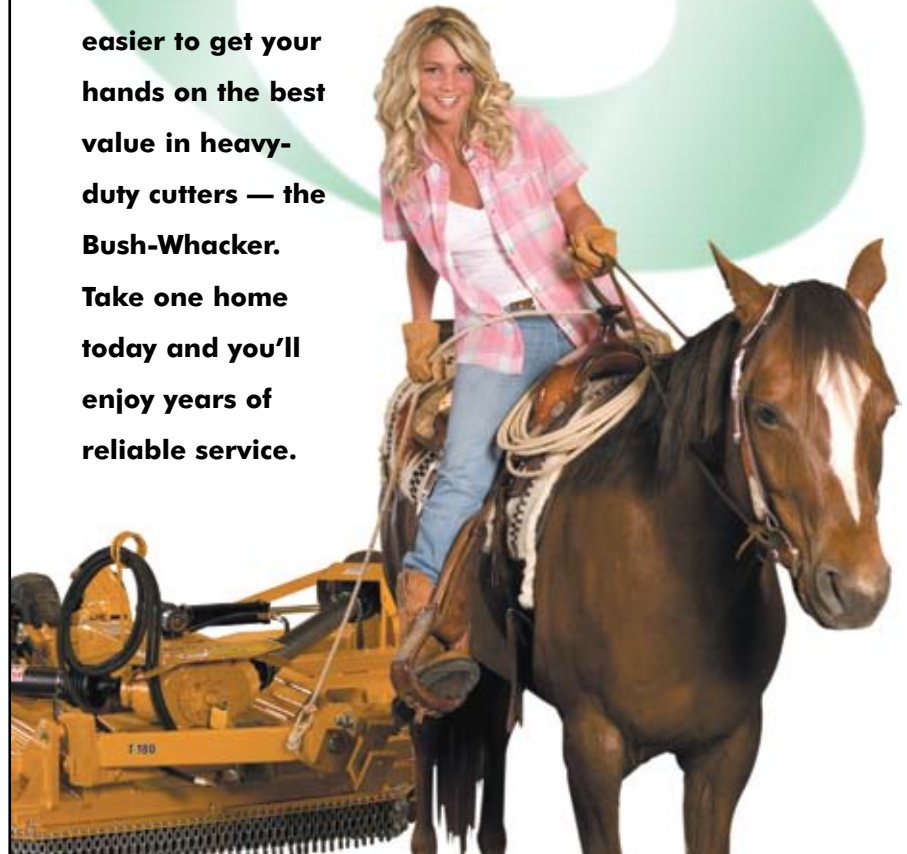
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The Chinese environmentalist asked, “How can we survive when we keep killing ourselves?” He, of course, was speaking about the continuing stream of toxins the Chinese release into their water and air.

The same question can be applied to organizations and safety. I’m thinking of an organization that is consumed with a pollutant stream of toxicity introduced by managers’ behaviors. One of the senior managers has the reputation of being dishonest, displaying emotional outbursts, and constantly changing priorities, leaving those who work with him in a cloud of confusion. This same manager wonders why other managers do not readily cooperate with him.

Another manager has the reputation of being a bit narcissistic. Cocky and beaming with self-confidence, he breezes his way through the organization, sharing his charm and wit with anyone who will listen. The problem is no one wants to listen. He “checks on his managers” with their down-line staff and utters cutting comments about other members of his peer group. Needless to say, this is not a popular guy.

The toxic pollutants are killing this organization, and employees wonder why no one is doing anything about it. If you should think I’m describing your organization—that would not be a good thing.

Our research concludes that such behaviors cost an organization about 25% of their operating expenses through

the loss of production. Do the math with your budget to see if you like the numbers.

Employees, in general, and managers, in particular, fail to realize the impact their behaviors have upon an organization. And, the impact is intensified the higher the manager is in the organizational hierarchy.

We’re back to the original question, “How can we survive when

Behavioral expectations for a positive workplace

- We look for the good in every situation.*
- We approach every situation with a “can do” attitude.*
- We use mistakes as learning opportunities.*
- We recognize each other for a job well done.*
- We celebrate successes.*
- We strive to have a “fun” workplace environment.*

we keep killing ourselves?” or more applicable to our environment, “How can we work safely when we’re killing the organizations with toxicity?” Working in an environment that is fraught with anxiety and frustration is not conducive to being a safe environment. Such conditions easily and quickly divert the employees’ attention from adhering to the safety procedures. When that happens, you know the likely outcome. Needless to say, accidents can be very expensive to your financial bottom line and the

welfare of your employees.

So what do you do? Remove the stream of pollutants from the workplace. Obviously space limitations require that I give you the short course, but there are three essential ingredients. **First**, develop the behavioral performance standards leading to a high performing organization—a positive workplace environment that is characterized by trust, respect, teamwork and open communication.

Second, systemically integrate these behaviors into your culture in a manner similar to integrating the technical expectations throughout your company. **Third**, hold people accountable to use the expected performance standards throughout the work day.

I’m often asked what it takes to change an organization’s culture. The short answer to this complex question is—one manager at a time. Obviously, there is more to it than this brief answer, but just remember that “top down change produces bottom up commitment.” ☐

Larry Cole, Ph.D, founded TeamMax®, Inc. and the TeamMax® methodologies to improve employee performance to maximize financial success. He is the author of *People-Smart Leaders: Maximize People, Performance & Profits*. Each year he speaks to thousands of people on personal development, change management, and measuring behavior change. He can be reached at: **larry@aligningchange.com or through www.aligningchange.com**

a member of Mississippi One-Call was considered by all in attendance to be the natural first step.

The Committee selected Senator Billy Thames as their lobbyist to work with the legislature on the proposed amendment to the damage prevention law. Ultimately, HB1215 became law and went into effect July 1, 2008.

Obviously, there is much more work to be done and the Committee continues to work together to identify the specific areas of need as defined by the PIPES Act. Co-Chairmen Jay Street and John McDill recently announced a stakeholders meeting scheduled for September 11, 2008 at the Hilton in Jackson to further gauge the interest in developing the next steps to strengthen the damage prevention law.

It has been pointed out that while the PIPES Act was driven by the Office of Pipeline Safety, all underground infrastructure needs protected. All the stakeholders at the local or state levels will be required to develop an effective damage prevention program. The program will need to meet national standards as third party damage to utilities continues to increase.

The legislation, though not fully defined, calls for the development and implementation of effective communications from the receipt of an excavation notification until the successful completion of the excavation. The bill also provides for the building of stronger alliances to promote a partnership in developing more effective training and public education, as well as establishing measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

As the program continues to develop, collecting and reporting of third part underground damages will be an important aspect of effective enforcement and will enhance public safety.

So the MSDPPC continues to look for ways to bring the current damage prevention program into compliance with the new standards. And in a way that makes sense for Mississippi's stakeholders. That will never be a matter of law...it's the right thing to do. ☐

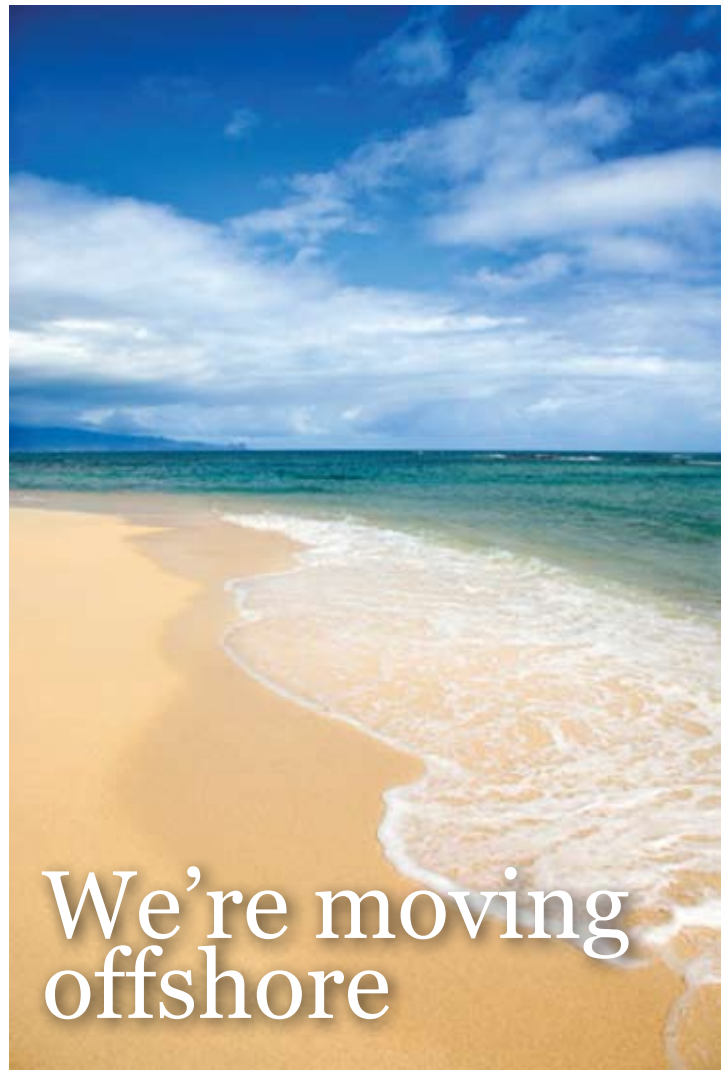
MSDPPC Meeting

September 11, 2008, 10:00am – 11:30am
Hilton Jackson on County Line Road

Lunch will be provided

Agenda

Nine Elements of a stronger damage prevention program
MSDPPC Mission and Vision Statements
White lining
Defining positive response
Dispute resolution



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Me and Dillard



Growing up as I did, on a truck patch farm in Southwest Arkansas, there was little entertainment, except what you provided for yourself. My little brother Bobby and I were raised by an uncle and aunt who had their hands full keeping us corralled, scrubbed, taught, clothed, fed, and out of the river so as not to drown prematurely.

Uncle Alva was a hard working, home loving, soft spoken log cutter and farmer who was born at the turn of the century in the river bottoms in which he later chose to live. His “duty” was to see to the needs and well-being of the family, and he worked day and night six days a week to make it happen.

Aunt Beulah was born on the farm across the river. She married my uncle when she was 15 years old. Uncle told me he first saw her across the river with two of her brothers selling cantaloupes, two for a nickel and three for a dime. Her “duty,” I suppose, was to insure that we grew up with some appreciation for the “right outlook” on life: good table manners, proper hygiene, respect for others (especially old folks) and basically, I guess, it was her duty to see that we didn’t kill or grievously injure each other during horseplay.

We didn’t have lots of company, but I could walk about a mile through the woods to spend the afternoon with my great friend Mr. Dillard. In all my years growing up and listening to great tellers of stories, there was none better. And as an added bonus, Dillard could make a Barlow knife disappear and could pull quarters out of either one of my ears, so he was a little extra special to be around.

One wintery day and late in the afternoon Uncle Alva, Aunt Beulah, Bobby and me were sitting around the pot bellied stove that Auntie was using to cook the beans for supper. It was

heavenly to be sitting around the warm stove with my Uncle’s and Aunt’s comforting voices filling the room. And the smell of supper almost ready had already flung a craving on me. I looked out the window toward the river and saw Dillard coming up to the house with his fishing pole over his shoulder. As was his habit, he quit fishing in time to stop by our house about supper time and today was no exception.

As he walked in the house, the screen door slammed behind him, and Auntie just said, “Wash up and come on to supper now.”

After a fine supper, we shuffled the chairs around in front of the stove. After everybody got settled down, we asked Dillard to tell us about his fishing trip.

“Where did you go,” I asked him, “didja get one?”

“I have a special place just past the swimming hole,” he said. “You know the one that is separated from the swimming hole by the beaver dam. Shoot, it couldn’t have been much more than two hours ago when I hooked the all time biggest catfish in the history of fishing.”

“What happened?” I asked. “Didja get it?”

He cut his eyes around at me and said, “I was using that big old fishing pole you and me cut down last week, just in case I hung a whopper...and, boy-hi-dee, did I ever get a-hold of one!”

“Well then where’s he at then,” my uncle inquired, as if he had rehearsed his part.

“I’m not rightly sure,” said Dillard, “the last I saw of him he was going through the lower limbs of that big old sycamore that hangs over the bank of the river.”

“Good grief! Dillard, you ought to be ashamed to tell a yarn like that to these boys and expect anybody to believe such a far-fetched story,” said Auntie.

“Now Miss Beulah, I got proof,” he replied calmly. He looked at me and said, “If you’ll put on your shoes and come on...we’ll have to hurry, mind you. I’ll go show you the hole I pulled him out of...he was so big, the hole probably hadn’t had time to fill up with water yet!”

As I jumped out of the chair to find my shoes, my Auntie’s voice stopped me, “You boys get yourselves into bed now, and I’ll be in there in a minute to say your prayers with you.” But she said it with her soft voices, with one of them real good smiles on her face. I just knew she liked the fishing story too.

It was going to be a great night! “Good night everybody,” I said, “See you next week Dillard.” Yes sir! Good fire, good food, good family, and good friends. There is going to be some sweet dreams at Aunt Beulah’s house tonight. ☐

sudoku puzzle
solution

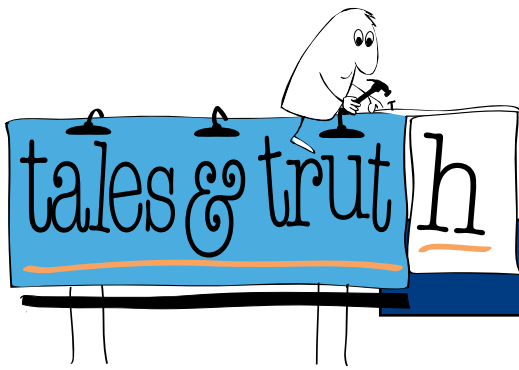
2	5	6	3	7	8	1	4	9
8	1	4	6	2	9	7	3	5
3	9	7	5	4	1	8	2	6
7	6	3	2	9	5	4	8	1
5	4	2	1	8	6	3	9	7
1	8	9	4	3	7	6	5	2
6	3	1	9	5	4	2	7	8
4	7	5	8	6	2	9	1	3
9	2	8	7	1	3	5	6	4

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acts inc. The logo for acts inc. features the word "acts" in a bold, italicized, yellow sans-serif font. To its right, the word "inc." is written in a smaller, blue sans-serif font. Further right is a graphic consisting of three overlapping squares in shades of blue, with a thin yellow horizontal line passing through the center of the squares. A small "NSM" logo is visible to the right of the main graphic.

advertising
marketing
public relations
web design
interactive marketing
corporate training



"Life isn't about waiting out the storm, it's about learning to dance in the rain."
Erin Lee Wescott

Begin somewhere. You cannot build a reputation on what you intend to do. *Liz Smith*

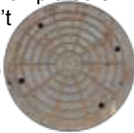
There are some things you can live without knowing and some you can't.

Life is not about how fast you run, or how high you climb, but how well you bounce.

The reason firehouses have circular stairways is from the days of lore when the engines were pulled by horses. The horses were stabled on the ground floor and figured out how to walk up straight staircases.

If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.

Manhole covers are always round. Why? The round cover rests on a lip that is smaller than the cover so it can't drop through the opening. A square or rectangular cover, no matter how it was made, could fall through.



The 1912 Summer Olympics held in Stockholm was the first time competitors came to compete from five continents and was the last time the Olympics gave out gold medals that were made entirely of gold.

Never miss a good chance to shut up.

The average human body contains enough:

- iron to make a 3 inch nail
- sulfur to kill all fleas on an average dog
- carbon to make 900 pencils
- potassium to fire a toy cannon
- fat to make 7 bars of soap
- phosphorous to make 2,200 match heads
- water to fill a 10-gallon tank

A hard working adult sweats up to 4 gallons per day. Most of the sweat evaporates before a person realizes it's there, though!

A mole can dig a tunnel 300 feet long in a single night.



If you're riding ahead of the heard, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.

During WWII, because a lot of players were called to duty, the Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles combined to become The Steagles.



sudoku puzzle

		6	3		8	1		9
8	1			2	9			
		7					2	6
		3			5			1
	4	2		8	6	3		7
	8				7			2
		1	9	5		2		
	7		8			9	1	
9		8			3		6	4

Fill in the grid with the numbers 1 through 9 so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 without repeating any of the numbers. Solution is on page 22.



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Pipeline markers indicate that a pipeline is located in the area. However, before digging, all excavators, including the general public, must call Mississippi One-Call to have the specific locations of underground pipelines determined and marked.



Know what's Below.
Call before you dig.

A pipeline awareness message from
ATMOS Energy
Colonial Pipeline Company
and the El Paso Pipeline Companies:
Southern Natural Gas Pipeline
Tennessee Gas Pipeline

Ten basic steps to

Safe backing

by Doug Meeks

Ironically, backing incidents are the easiest to prevent by simply taking the time to pay attention to your surroundings, identifying potential backing hazards, and practicing “Ten Basic Steps to Safe Backing”.

1. Look for options to avoid backing, such as going around the block, look for a pull-through situation, or use curbside parking.
2. When it is necessary to pull into a parking space or driveway, consider backing into the space upon arrival instead of having to back out when you leave if it appears practical and does not create additional hazards.
3. If you must pull forward into a space and have to back the vehicle out, conduct a 360-degree walk-around to look for potential backing hazards such as people, vehicles, guard posts, or other items. Pay close attention to the area behind the vehicle and don't dawdle doing paperwork or making phone calls after the walk-around. Pull out before conditions have a chance to change.
4. If you have a passenger with you, have them step out and act as a guide. If you have no passenger and you can't be absolutely sure of what is behind you, it is much better to ask for assistance from other workers or even a passerby than to risk a backing incident. Make sure that the guide stays in plain view and use agreed upon hand signals as you back. Stop immediately if you lose sight of your guide.
5. Make sure mirrors are adjusted properly. Blind Spot mirrors (round, fish-eye type) can really help keep you from misjudging clearances on the sides and rear corners of the vehicle or to help you identify changing conditions while backing.
6. Whenever possible back and turn towards the driver's side. This allows you to watch the rear of the vehicle with the clearest view possible.
7. Back slowly and cautiously at no more than normal walking speed, checking both sides as you back. Consider lowering the window and turning down the volume of the radio to heighten your awareness to immediate surroundings.
8. When backing out of a driveway, stop at the sidewalk and check for pedestrians, obstacles, or oncoming traffic.
9. Do not back at or into an intersection.
10. While backing as a driving maneuver, it is important to assess your surroundings as you enter the area where you are to turn around. Take steps to position your vehicle so that you will have maximum clearances to complete the maneuver. If unsure of your clearances, stop the vehicle and reassess the hazards.

Doug Meeks, is a Construction Health and Safety Technician and Damage Prevention Manager with Dig TESS.

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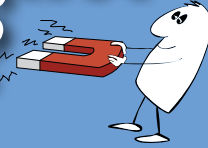
800.309.7666

601.992.4008 fax

Cherrell@mnga.org



Are you a magnet for business?



by Jerry Wilson

Danny was strutting through the building like an old wet hen. Feathers ruffled, a constant squawk rolled out from under his breath in a mumble. Nobody seemed to attempt to listen. He walked over to Don and said, "Those guys knew they shouldn't be doing the job that way – you should call them back and make them do it over."

Don smiled and said he would take care of it. It was obvious that he was politely dismissing Danny.

What's wrong with Danny, I asked? "He isn't getting enough work, and his frustration shows, but the real problem is Danny."

His behavior style has been his worst enemy for a long time. When the market was booming, Danny had plenty of work. Others tolerated him because of the labor shortage. Since the change in the market, folks are choosing contractors they prefer to work with.

Danny is the only person shocked that his business is suffering. The ironic part is, he and his team do good work and are competitively priced. He's even cut prices to attract more work, yet it's sluggish. As a business guy, it just doesn't make sense to him.

So what's the big deal you may ask? What do the contractors who have plenty of work do to keep their pipeline full? You know the answer; it's a lot of different things.

It starts with us. People like to be with happy people. Being happy is like a magnet in a bucket full of steel; it draws everything around us. Abraham Lincoln said, "Most folks are about as

happy as they make up their minds to be.

About ninety percent of the things in our lives are right, and about ten percent are wrong. If we want to be happy, all we have to do is to concentrate on the ninety percent that



are right and ignore the ten per cent that are wrong.

Talk about the good things that are happening. I'm not advocating sticking your head in the sand and ignoring reality. What we need is positive input to help us stay balanced and optimistic. To attract business, focus on the positive things. When talking with others, emphasize your successes. Winners know that success breeds success!

Make it intentional; we must choose to smile before we feel like it.

Strangely enough, that makes us feel like smiling. Psychologists tell us that we can't control how we feel, although we can control how we act. Feeling follows action. If we act a certain way we will in fact start feeling that way.

It's not about telling people we're happy; it's all about showing them. It starts with our face. It's like getting dressed to go to work. We choose clothes appropriate for what we anticipate we'll be doing each day. Let's do the same thing by choosing to wear a smile when we go on a job.

Make your greeting a magnet. When someone asks, "How are you doing?" the answer should be a positive response. People hire people they perceive are doing well, not people they think are in trouble. Everyone likes to be with winners, whether in our own company or when we're hiring others to do work for us. Who wants to be around someone that says, "I'm surviving" or "OK, I guess"? That can be a deal breaker. It creates a hum-drum atmosphere. Listen to your response the next time someone asks you. Does your attitude draw others in like a magnet? If not, let's change and attract more business. ☐

Jerry Wilson is associated with ACTS Now. He has personally worked with over 4,900 companies in increasing sales and enhancing leadership skills. He can be contacted at: www.aligningchange.com

The voyage of discovery is not in the seeking new landscapes but in the having new eyes. *Marcel Proust*

Every situation, properly perceived, becomes an opportunity. *Helen Schucman*

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle. *Philo of Alexandria*

Publisher's perspective



One time David Allan Coe thought he'd written the perfect country and western song until a friend pointed out that it lacked several critical references. It made no mention of momma, getting drunk, rain, trucks, prison or trains. So he crammed all those elements into the last verse and then he knew for certain he'd written the perfect country and western song. Well, naturally it can't compare to George Jones doing "He stopped loving her today," but much of the perfection there has to do with George and not the song.


I'm bound to share this perspective with you for the following reason. It has been my privilege to speak to groups across the country about creating effective damage prevention efforts for several years. Often the discussions outside the meeting rooms are the most enlightening, and I'll readily admit in part, because I'm listening instead of talking.

Almost without fail and without geographical limitation the perspectives shared follow an industry line. While all of them are partly right, all of them are in the wrong. While we certainly need measurable standards, enforceable legislation, and clearer contracts, we will be unable to resolve the real issues of personal responsibility in such manner.

Cramming all the right words into the law, contracts, or documents doesn't necessarily mean that the contract is perfect or better or even more effective. Surely what we've learned from the largest to the smallest is that we are going to have to work together if it works at all. Taking responsibility for our actions, working to help one another be successful, and doing the right thing are not for the squeamish or faint of heart. An old friend once told me, "Fear is the darkroom where negative attitudes are developed." Many find themselves opposed to good ideas or direction for no other reason than that they are afraid of what might happen and that will likely never come to pass.

I applaud the efforts Mississippi One-Call and the MSDPPC have undertaken. Bringing all the stakeholders together to discuss the impact of any proposed legislation is not only good politics; it is the right thing to do. Promoting the formation of such committees and actively pursuing those with different perspectives and ideas will only create a better environment for success.

If you believe that we must develop more effective ways to work together and want to help make that a reality, the MSDPPC is looking for you. Check out the Summit this fall and find out how to become part of a team that is committed to addressing the issues that you face every day.

And while that may not be the perfect solution, it moves all of us in that direction. 



Dear Mr. Wilson,

We received your magazine today and I sat down with it, expecting to read the same things one always sees in other trade magazines. But, I was delighted when I turned to your article "They're playing favorites again...". My husband had been working for another local foundation company for about 7 years, when new management came in more worried about profit over quality. Not long after that, he left the company and we started Absolute Foundation Solutions, Inc. The business was started on less than a shoestring, but with a few 'rules' that we set for ourselves.

1) Always even if cuts into profit, do right by the customer. We always have.

2) Treat the customer's home as if it were ours, and leave it as we found it or better.

3) Treat every customer with the utmost respect, whether they live in a million dollar house or a \$30,000 house. For us, this meant offering the best price possible from the beginning, even when we knew the customer could/would pay more.

4) Last but not least, if we can't do what we think is necessary to really fix the customers problems...we will bow out gracefully before beginning the job. In other words, if someone just wants an area in a house jacked so that the door will work, we will not do it.

5) Keep our overhead as low as possible so that we don't have to pass it on to the customer.

That was in 2001 and we are still operating under the same principles. As a result, the early years were a little slow but we are now recognized in our area for those principles. Though we are in the yellow pages, about 60% of our business comes from referrals and commercial companies using us repeatedly. How many foundation companies can say the same thing? Again, thank you for pointing out the importance of these principles.

Sincerely,
Michelle and Cesar Caballero

Dear Editor,

Thanks for letting Dillard remind me of a time lost in memory. It was fun being reminded.

Travis Smith