

# NULCA News



Published for the members of the National Utility Locating Contractors Association

WINTER 2008

## PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT



NULCA President  
Robert Shively

I am pleased with the progress that NULCA has made over the past year in addressing key issues of infrastructure safety and damage prevention. At our November 2007 quarterly meeting in Las Vegas, the NULCA Board voted to take additional steps as we endeavor to be a positive influence on behalf of our membership.

Perhaps the most important contribution we can make as a trade organization comes through participation in Common Ground Alliance (CGA) committees. Members

[continued on page 2...](#)

## 811 Update

According to Larry Englerth, Executive Director of South Dakota One-Call and a NULCA CGA One-Call Systems International Committee (OSCI) representative, since the national 8-1-1 program rolled out in May of 2007, most state agencies and utilities had already prepared advertising and promotional materials for the year. Consequently, many of those organizations were not able to devote their full resources to 8-1-1 promoting awareness in 2007.

“These primary stakeholders are just now beginning to focus communication efforts on the nationwide 8-1-1 system across the country with 2008 promotion programs,” said Englerth, “and as a result we anticipate that public awareness of 8-1-1 will increase measurably in 2008.”



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

Englerth also reports a new one-call development that may be of particular interest to NULCA members. The EPA is proposing that hazardous waste sites be included in the one-call system, with a status equivalent to utilities.

By so doing, EPA hopes to prevent locating, excavation, grading, well drilling, and other future site activities from contacting contaminated soil, groundwater, or cleanup-related mechanisms. This should reduce the risk of harm to the health and safety of site excava-

[continued on page 3...](#)

## CGA Committee Activity

The **Best Practices Committee** of the CGA met most recently in November 2007, with a broad agenda of items in process and reports from a number of task groups. The Best Practices Committee notes that it is important that stakeholders implement damage prevention Best Practices that are currently identified in the Common Ground Study Report, as applicable. The committee will focus on efforts to identify those practices that are appropriate for each stakeholder group, gauge current levels of implementation, and encourage and promote increased Best Practices implementation.

The Committee will also consider incorporating new Best Practices developments in the damage prevention processes, procedures,



practices, and technology. Other items in process include project coordination, one-call quality standards, the issue of locating sewer service laterals, and proposed new practices for tracer wire.

A report of the December 12, 2007 CGA **Regional Partners Committee** teleconference is posted on the CGA website.

## ...continued President's Viewpoint

are encouraged to follow the activities of this important organization, which are published at [www.com-mongroundalliance.com](http://www.com-mongroundalliance.com). We owe a debt of gratitude to the volunteers who contribute their time and effort to the various categories of CGA activity.

At the upcoming quarterly meeting of the NULCA board we intend to focus on increasing support for our association through CGA involvement. We are looking for means to supply input and direction to the CGA in a way that involves all NULCA member, not just our committee representatives.

Our central goal as an association continues to be defining, establishing and maintaining high standards in underground utility contract locating so as to improve safety for the general public as well as utility workers, excavators and NULCA members. Your ideas and suggestions are important to this task, and you're invited to share them with the association and with the committee members listed on the last page of the newsletter.

## NULCA Hosts Redesigned Website

Phase 1 of the new NULCA Internet site was rolled out in mid January, 2008. According to NULCA Executive Director, Larry Bodkin, the goal of this redesign is to make the site increasingly useful and interactive, providing expanded information of use to members and their employees. "We intend to refine our Internet site to be an effective tool for communication within the NULCA organization," said Larry. "New features include improved access to training standards, better job posting features, timely CGA committee summaries and a functionality that allows members to edit their own passwords and data, search for members with specific services by location, and pay dues online with full security."

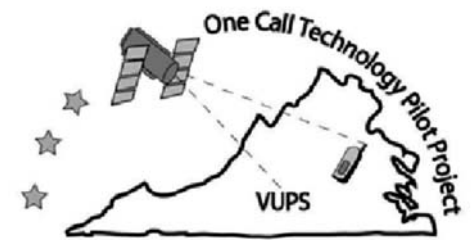


Larry explains that additional modifications to the website will follow shortly. A member blog feature is planned that will allow the exchange of practical information, and facilitate member input to board members and CGA committee representatives.

## Pilot Project Tests GPS for One Call Operations

The CGA and other stakeholders sponsored a One-Call pilot project recently to measure the value of new technologies in providing better information about areas to be excavated. The goal is to prevent damage by getting improved information from contractors to help locators be more specific about details and requirements. Phase I of this project emphasized the development and use of electronic white lining by means of GPS technology and enhanced one-call processes.

The State of Virginia was selected as the location for this Pilot Project, and Virginia One-Call has developed and implemented enhanced mapping capabilities as an important part of the program.



According to the Phase I project report, this Pilot Project resulted in surprising improvements in both cost and efficiency. The program also yielded substantial improvements in ticket accuracy, and reduced the number of locate request cancellations and the incidence of extended marking requests.

### ...811 Update continued from pg1.

tors, construction workers and the public. Without the One-Call process, excavators might unknowingly contact or otherwise disturb residually contaminated media or underground environmental cleanup mechanisms.

Bill Kiger of PA One-Call reports that environmental legislation reflecting this proposed change is currently under consideration

in Pennsylvania, where there have been several hazardous waste site incidents involving chemical and metal contamination. Such legislation will likely be introduced in other states in the future.

One-call participants are asking how such a program will operate in practical terms, and who might be responsible for the associated liabilities.

# NULCA Member Profile



90 utility customers.

“As we all know, utility locating has become a highly competitive business,” said Quinn, “and this benefits the industry with improved safety as well as greater efficiency and cost effectiveness.”

He explains that new ELM technicians undergo classroom work followed by supervised training in the field. They also

ELM Locating & Utility Services was founded in 1991 in the state of Montana. According to ELM President Matt Quinn, the company began with just a few utility customers and a seasonal workforce. Today ELM Locating has operations in sixteen states, more than 1100 employees and approximately

work directly with utility representatives to better understand their specific requirements.

According to Quinn, ELM Locating & Utility Services has implemented proprietary work-management software, which has enabled the company to improve services.

ELM Locating was an early adapter of digital photography, collecting and uploading images for each ticket as work is done. “We use site photos for supervisory monitoring as well as immediate customer review, and they are seen as a huge customer benefit,” he said. The company has also implemented a GIS-based system to collect, store, analyze and display mapping data.

## Coming Events

The 2008 NULCA Annual Meeting will be held on March 26, 2008 from 2 pm to 6 pm, and the association’s Board of Directors will convene the following day at 1pm.

## GPR Rounds Out the Locator’s Tool Kit

By Matthew J. Wolf, President  
MALÀ GeoScience USA, Inc.

As every NULCA member knows, utility locating and mapping requirements may vary substantially from ticket-to-ticket, depending on parameters such as soil condition, the depth of buried objects, and their relative electrical conductivity. Technicians need access to a range of tools in order to satisfy every ticket efficiently and accurately.

Use of non-metallic materials such as fiber-optic cables and plastic pipes in the construction of buried utilities continues to expand, and ground-penetrating radar (GPR) is uniquely able to pinpoint such objects. GPR operates by transmitting an electromagnetic wave into the ground and detecting the energy that is reflected from target objects.

An important feature of GPR is its sensitivity to nearly any kind of utility, conductive or nonconductive, assuming



sufficient contrast in dielectric constant between the utility and surrounding soil. Detection and marking applications include all utilities as well as storage tanks, underground voids, service connections and valves, boxes and vaults.

The latest GPR systems for utility locating incorporate mapping features and a user interface for plug-and-play GPS capabilities. Data can be exported for ticket reports and post-processing. For more information on GPR for utility locating, visit <http://www.malags.com>.



These events are scheduled in conjunction the Common Ground Alliance Annual Meeting and Conference, March 25-27, at the Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. CGA committees will meet as follows:

### **March 24th**

OSCI Committee

### **March 25th**

Data Reporting & Evaluation  
Educational Programs & Membership,  
Marketing, Communications  
Committee  
Research and Development Committee  
Regional Partner Committee

### **March 26th**

Best Practice Committees



**NULCA Headquarters**

2563 Capital Medical • Blvd Tallahassee • Florida 32308  
850-531-8352 | [www.nulca.org](http://www.nulca.org)

NULCA’s mission is to define, establish, and maintain high standards and practices in the underground utility contract locating industry. Its top priority is the safety of the general public, excavators, and locating employees. NULCA partners with facility owners, excavating contractors, suppliers and regulatory agencies with the common goal of eliminating damage to underground facilities.

President  
**Robert Shively**  
317-575-7801  
robshively@sm-p.com

Vice President  
**Matt Quinn.- P.E.**  
406-327-2900  
matt.quinn@elmlocating.com

Executive Director  
**Larry E. Bodkin, Jr. M.S., CAE**  
850-531-8352  
lbodkin@nulca.org

Treasurer  
**Mike Bell**  
484-410-1316  
mbell@stsus.net  
Secretary  
**Christopher Koch**  
612-715-1864  
cakoch@msn.com

**NULCA’s Primary CGA Committee Members**

Jamal Masumi, President: STS/Utiliquest – NULCA Board  
*CGA Locating Stakeholder & CGA Board of Directors*

Rick Welsh – President: Locating, Inc. – NULCA Board  
*Education/Dig Safely Committee*

Gwen Kibbe – VP Quality Management: SM&P Utility Services  
*Best Practices Committee*

Chuck Morton, VP: Radiodetection – NULCA Board  
*Research & Development Committee*

Jacque Washburn – Industry Consultant  
*Marketing Committee*

Josh Hinrichs – CIO: ELM Locating – NULCA Board  
*OSCI Committee*

Ryan Hyman – VP: SM&P Locating Services  
*Data Collection Committee*

