

On The Mark Utility Locating Services, Inc. 8/12/2020 Edition 1, Volume 19

## Safety First: Avoid Distracted Driving/Don't Speed

Did you know that over 80% of OTM employees drive vehicles as part of their day-to-day job? So, when we say **Safety First**, vehicle safety is a major part of this core company value.



In late July, Rob Polimeni sent out an email reporting that via the 811 One Call Center, an OTM driver was reported, by a concerned pedestrian driver, for speeding and careless driving. The driver subsequently admitted to

impulsively jumping a red light at a traffic stop when he got **distracted** by his phone and mistook a right turn green arrow for a straight drive on a green light. Praise God no one was injured.

*The number of fatalities in **distracted-affected** crashes was 2,841, or 7.8% of total fatalities in 2018*

*According to the Insurance Information Institute, nearly 17 percent of all traffic crashes in 2017 and 26 percent of all traffic fatalities were caused by **speeding***



**Distracted driving** is anything that takes your attention away from driving. Sending a text message, talking on a cell phone, using a navigation system, and eating while driving are some examples of distracted driving. **Any of these distractions can endanger the driver and others**

We encourage you to stay alert and don't be distracted. Don't text and drive. Don't talk on cell phone and drive. Don't speed. Obey the traffic rules & regulations. Make **Safety First** a behavior and not just an empty slogan! Return home to your loved ones the same way you left that morning. Be Safe!

## **NEW BUSINESS:** Avangrid City of Rochester Locating

Back in March of 2019, Wayne and John worked on an unsolicited proposal for OTM to do gas & electric utility locating for Avangrid for the city of Rochester. The request for quote (RFQ) that Avangrid had issued included a 3 year locating program for all of RG&E and NYSEG. Both of these operating companies or OPCOs represent over 200,000 811 tickets per year! We were only seeking to support about 15,000 tickets per year or 7.5% of this total.

Avangrid did not consider or give us a response to our proposal. The facilities locating program was subsequently awarded to USIC in early 2020. As things would work out however, by June of this year, USIC were having problems with both damages and more so with keeping up with overall ticket volume. They had hundreds of delayed tickets in the city of Rochester alone. Avangrid reached out to OTM and asked if we could help. We reviewed, updated, and resubmitted a proposal, and it was accepted!

Within a 2-week period of time, a team consisting of Wayne Coleman, Joe Villella, Jaqualine Harrison, Chris Lofton, Julie Varela, and John Bryant, and lead by Austin Okwudili put together this new program. In 2 weeks, this team Northeast Gas Association (NGA) operator qualified incl. a physical exams a number of existing

employees, interviewed & hired new employees, purchased RF equipment and locating supplies, leased new vehicles, and configured a new ticket management systems for the program, along with signing a contract and setting up all of the backend finance & accounting. Yes, that's right. We did it all in 2 weeks and launched the program which has now processed almost 2,000 tickets or about 100 tickets/day. One of the strengths of small companies is the ability to move quickly and we demonstrated this quickness and agility on this new program.



This new program is led by Joe Villella and supported by Joe Piccaretto, Brandon Paralez, Lorenzo Davis, and Chad Irwin (not shown in photo on left). This core locating team will be supported by Wayne who did this many years ago with one arm tied behind his back. Lol. Also, we are developing a back up team that will consist of Adam Banks, Rob Polimeni, and Daniel Sasu.

Other employees may be trained in developed in one-call locating to back up the program as well. Austin did the project management and will continue to support program relative to IT/IS (computers, tablets, and cell phones) along with UtiliSphere (our ticket management system). He will also identify and implement various process improvement initiatives.

The new team is off to a good start and we look forward to a successful program and hopefully one that can expand into a broader geographical area over the coming years.

## New Vehicles

Finally, our new vehicles have arrived! We ordered these vehicles back in February prior to the official hit of COVID-19 and it is now the end of July when we are taking receipt of these cars. Our Damage Prevention Vehicle (DPV) NYSEG employees have been patiently waiting for these cars since March.

Well these **Chevy Sonic LT RS** cars look absolutely awesome. While we did not request the LS sport package which includes a really cool body

design, flood lights, red highlighted seats, detailed red steering wheel stitching, and floor mats, we are happy to have it. Maybe God decided to bless us with these for the collective patience we demonstrated.

We think these may be the perfect car for the DPV program. They are much bigger and have more horsepower than the Chevy Sparks, also known as our toy cars. They has more space for our larger size employees but the general price point/lease payment amount and fuel efficiency of 26 city/ 34 highway makes them affordable in the context of the competitively bid DPV program.

Our general plan is to replace all current Chevy Sparks and Sonics with this vehicle.



## Why does the vehicle matter?

Vehicle costs including lease payment, fuel costs, maintenance and repair costs, is our largest expense, second only to employees. Not only is it a major cost of goods sold (COGS) item but it factors largely into our overall safety/safety performance as a company.

All most all our services are enabled by vehicles, namely, we can't provide the service without the use of a reliable, cost effective vehicle. Private utility locating, one-call utility locating, damage prevention vehicles, inside leak inspection, etc. All these services require people of course and vehicles, at a minimum.

Given that we competitively bid our programs, the vehicle selection and total cost of ownership is a major factor in all programs. Also given that most of our employees driving a vehicle drive the vehicle throughout the day and spend a lot of their time in the vehicle driving to and from various locations, vehicle safety is a key part of our overall safety. Doing daily walk around inspections prior to starting your workday. Doing regular inspections of your vehicle and reporting any known issues. Keeping the vehicle clean and in proper order. These things matter a lot as it relates to safety and being able to have this essential work tool.

Well, again we are excited to acquire new vehicles for our employees and we look forward to rotating our fleet as we move through the year.

## It Was A Beautiful Day for A Picnic!

Yes, Friday, July 17 was a beautiful day for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Company picnic. The Rochester, NY teams and office staff had a wonderful time enjoying food, company family, & fun. The picnic was held in the open area just across from our new headquarters. We put up some pop-up tents and had some delicious food from Dinosaur BBQ. Check out some of the pics from the event by clicking on the photo below

