

The Southwestern Virginia Damage Prevention Committee met on Thursday, February 26, 2009. The meeting was hosted by Roanoke Gas Company. There were 30 persons present.

Sally Bevilacqua of Roanoke Gas, the Committee Chairperson, opened the meeting with a welcome to all present. All persons present provided their names and the names of the companies for which they worked.

Steve Light of VUPS shared a presentation on the Virginia Pilot Project. Some highlights:

- Phase I focuses on “electronic white lining,” the ability for excavators to identify areas of proposed excavation by capturing GPS points.
- A demonstration was provided of the VUPS/Norfield Phase I application. Of those present, Roanoke Gas Company, Contracting Enterprises, Inc., and Classic City Mechanical all use this technology in conjunction with Web Ticket Entry to enter tickets.
- Phase II will look into using GPS technology to assist locators in creating electronic manifests. These will be uploaded to the VUPS server and made available to excavators as part of their ticket confirmation information.
- Phase III hopes to provide the electronic manifest information back to the excavator. Excavating equipment would be equipped with a computer notebook that has the electronic manifest for the excavator on the job site. Additionally, research is being done to see if GPS-enabled excavating equipment can alert the excavator as he approaches the coordinates of a located line.

Several folks had good questions about the different pieces of technology that are in use or hope to be in use in the near future.

Ashley Mansfield of the State Corporation Commission shared information about the May 2008 change to the state building code. A copper tracer wire, 18 AWG minimum, is now required with the installation of non-metallic sanitary sewer piping. This makes the building code in agreement with the 2002 change to the Damage Prevention Act requiring that all utility lines installed on or after July 1, 2002, to be done so in a way that the line can be located by a utility locator.

The next meeting for the group will be announced and published on the Events page of the www.missutilityofvirginia.com website.