

The most recent Western Virginia Damage Prevention Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2009. The meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Staunton. 23 persons attended the meeting.

Bernie Gardner with Columbia Gas of Virginia opened the meeting with a welcome and quick run-through of the meeting agenda.

Steve Light of VUPS provided an update on several topics:

- Virginia Pilot Program
 - Phase I - Electronic Whitelining
 - Recognition of Western VA technology users
 1. Guy C. Eavers Excavating
 2. Roanoke Gas
 3. Contracting Enterprises Inc.
 4. Classical City Mechanical
 - Phase II - GPS technology with locating
 - Testing of technology should begin soon
 - Phase III – use information gathered in Phase I and Phase II to have safer excavating
- Water/Sewer lateral issue and task force meetings that will be occurring in 2009
- DEAP public awareness tracking software now has Education Credit report functionality available for users
- VUPS recently sent a letter to member database contacts to remind them to update their mapping
- 2009 Education Campaign plans include creation of excavator manuals and marking standards manuals in Spanish
- VUPS will participate in various home and garden shows in 2009. Ones close to this region include events in Salem and Harrisonburg.
- Upcoming Events
 - DPC meetings nearby (Lynchburg, Southwestern VA, Fredericksburg and Winchester)
 - March Advisory Committee meeting (March 3)
 - VUPS Membership meeting in March (March 11)
 - Excavator training sponsored by Roanoke Gas in March (March 5)
 - 2009 Virginia Damage Prevention Conference, April 21-23

See the Events page of www.missutilityofvirginia.com for dates, places and details!

Dave Schmidt of the State Corporation Commission introduced himself and described his role as a pipeline investigator for the SCC. After that, he showed a video that reviews the “Dig with CARE” presentation. (*Note: Free copies of the video in English and Spanish on DVD are available from the SCC or Miss Utility of Virginia.*) At the end of the video, Dave commented that operators have additional (federal) laws that they have to work with, particularly gas operators. When 10% of a plastic gas line’s wall is damaged and lost, that line has to be replaced. It is much cheaper for the gas companies to repair and replace lines at the time of damage than much further down the road. Consequently, it is cheaper for the one doing the damage to have the line repaired at the time of damage. He encouraged excavators to communicate with gas companies, even when lines are nicked or scraped.

Bernie Gardner commented that in 2008, CGV saw about 50% of their damages in this part of the state resulting from excavation with no ticket. He added that hand digging was a huge cause of damage, too.



During the open forum part, there were lots of questions about the GPS technologies being developed in the Pilot Program. VUPS was asked to see if demonstrations of the technologies can be arranged for the May meeting. Information about such a presentation will be provided in the mailing for the May meeting, which is scheduled for May 12.

