

## **Ryan White – Board Liaison, USA North 811**

USA North 811 plays a key role in underground damage prevention by providing an efficient communication service between excavators and USA North 811's utility members in the Northern and Central California Regions.

USA North 811 receives planned excavation requests from excavators and transmits these requests, called "tickets," to all participating utility members of USA North 811 who may have facilities at that specific excavation site.

The notified utility members will then respond to the "ticket" in one of three ways. If the utility member has lines within the planned excavation site they will either mark the horizontal path of their facility or provide information about the location of their facility.

If a utility member does not have lines within the planned excavation site they will advise the excavator of clearance for facilities that they own.

By notifying excavators of utility members in the area of their excavation, and by conversely notifying utility operators of excavation in and around their buried facilities, USA North 811 is able to play a critical role in the facilitation of safe digging and underground damage prevention in California.

Founded in May of 1975, USA North 811 became the first "Call Before You Dig" One Call center on the West Coast. Initially, USA North 811 serviced only 3 counties: Contra Costa, Alameda and Sacramento, and had a total of 25 utility members. Throughout its first year, USA North 811 processed a total of 9,544 ticket requests for planned excavations.

38 years later, USA North 811's service area now encompasses 49 counties stretching from the Oregon border all the way down to Kern County, and services 1,264 utility members. As further evidence of its growth and continued importance, USA North 811 finished 2012 by processing more than 600,000 new ticket requests.

As the California excavation and utility industries have expanded over the last 38 years, so too has the USA North 811 program and the need for awareness of “Call 811 Before You Dig”.

USA North 811 addresses this increasing need in three very important ways.

Our educational program provides free Safety Awareness For Excavators events to contractors, utility operators, and members of the public. Our member safety and excavator safety events include private one on one and on site demonstrations.

All of our presentations and events focus on the one call process, laws and procedures; with the core of the presentation being built around our 5 steps to a SAFE excavation. These steps include:

- 1. Survey & Mark**
- 2. Call 811 Before You Dig**
- 3. Wait the Required Time**
- 4. Respect the Marks**
- 5. Dig with Care**

The ultimate goal of our education program is to advise excavators of the lawful requirement to “Call 811 Before You Dig” as well as engender awareness of the importance of the Call 811 Before You Dig service and the excavation laws that it represents.

In addition to our education program, USA North 811 also increases 811 awareness by partnering with utility members and damage prevention groups through targeted marketing campaigns and events.

These campaigns and events include social media marketing and outreach, promotional giveaways, attendance at public home shows and fairs as well as electronic and print media.

Just recently, we partnered with the Mark-it-Madness committee of One Calls of America on an advertisement in the April edition of Martha Stewart magazine, emphasizing the importance of “Calling 811 Before You Dig.”

Finally, along with our educational program and marketing campaigns and events, USA North 811 also participates in regional and national underground damage prevention groups and meetings.

Partnering with the Common Ground Alliance Nationally, as well as the California Regional Common Ground Alliance regionally, USA North 811 is able to participate in effective damage prevention forums that gather together a variety of stakeholders to discuss and establish key underground damage prevention “best practices” that will positively impact California and the Nation as a whole.

Our ultimate goal at USA North 811 is to protect and save lives. We accomplish this goal on a daily basis through the services we provide. Whether it is through our crucial role as the communication link between excavators and USA North 811’s utility members, through our educational program and marketing campaigns and events, or through our participation in damage prevention groups, we view ourselves as a damage prevention leader in California and look forward to continuing in that role in the future.