

Announcer ([00:02](#)):

You are listening to the Safety Moment Podcast by Utility Safety Partners. Safety is always a good conversation and it's a click away. Here's your host, Mike Sullivan.

Mike Sullivan ([00:15](#)):

Hey everybody. Welcome to the Safety Moment podcast. I'm Mike Sullivan, your host. I am glad you'd be able to join us today. We're going to be speaking with Derrick Mann, Lisa Kosolofski, and James Cameron from the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance. There's been a lot of stuff going on there for quite some time. The Saskatchewan first call has now moved over and been absorbed by the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance, and yet after all of that work going on in the background, you probably never knew if you were one of their heavier users in Saskatchewan because they did it so well. Lisa, Derek, and James. Welcome to the podcast, the Safety Moment. This is our, I believe it's our 58th episode. Can you believe that? I can't believe that to be honest. As I've said a few times in other podcasts, we began doing this during covid, our producer Doug Downs, from Stories and Strategies convinced me, Hey Mike, you should do a podcast.

([01:12](#)):

And back then it was okay, we need to reach out and find different ways to reach out to people. And I agreed, and here we are, 57, 58 episodes later and we're still doing it. And why? Well, because it works. And as Doug has reminded me many times, a podcast is like having a cup of coffee with somebody in your audience. And why not? We do it all the time. You meet somebody at Tim Horton's, you meet somebody somewhere, you have a cup of coffee, you have a conversation, you leave that conversation a little bit brighter, a little bit more informed, and that's exactly what we're doing. So anyway, welcome to. Well, it's got like a cup of coffee I guess. Welcome to the podcast, Lisa, how about you introduce yourself first to our listeners.

Lisa Kosolofski ([01:54](#)):

Thanks for having us. My name is Lisa, the director of Sask. First call was hired on last fall to kind of take over and manage this wonderful, wonderful, and really thrilled to be here. I have a background in marketing communications. I was the executive director of the Medicine Hat Construction Association before returning back to Saskatchewan and just thrilled to be here to talk Safety first Call and this evolution of this wonderful, wonderful organization.

Mike Sullivan ([02:26](#)):

And it has been an evolution. I'm anxious to get onto that actually. How about you, James? You've been around for quite some time as well in Saskatchewan. Tell us about yourself.

James Cameron ([02:34](#)):

Yeah, I'm James Cameron. I'm the manager of facility engineering and asset integrity at RIN here in Calgary. Just recently relocated to Calgary from Saskatchewan. Been on the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance board for, I think it's something like nine years now. And then last fall I took on the role of presidents of the board of directors for SA First Call.

Mike Sullivan ([03:02](#)):

Welcome James. And I'll go to Derek Mann. Derek, and you and I have known each other for a while, but please introduce yourselves. Yourself.

James Cameron ([03:12](#)):

Absolutely. My name is Derek Mann. I am currently the president of Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance. Been president for about three, just going on four years, I believe. Been involved with the board much longer than that. And yeah, really had a passion for damage prevention. Mike, you and I go back a long time with all the work there. I started out in SaaS Energy 23 years ago and doing a lot of integrity work. And a big part of integrity is damage prevention, and hence, that's really been a big part of my career. Also worked a lot in pipelines and facilities, doing designs and that sort of thing. But yeah, it's a really great relationship I've found with Satch and Common Ground Alliance and SaaS First call that came from SaaS Energy and SaaS Energy. So it's a nice tie there.

Mike Sullivan ([04:06](#)):

Yeah, we're all part of a big network, whether it's Canadian Common Ground Alliance where the one calls or an altercation centers where we're being referred to now, but it's like a brotherhood sisterhood type thing. And really that's who we're catering to. It's a broad audience, and we're all trying for that. One goal is to reduce damages and how we go about it is very similar, obviously in different parts of the country, different parts of the world, but every little area has its own uniqueness to it, and there's something very unique about how Saskatchewan does things, and I'm glad to explore that with you guys today. But Saskatchewan, first call, Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance. It was a long evolution. It was, I think the second to last first call before Manitoba to arrive on the scene. And maybe just take us through that a little bit. That was 20 some odd years ago.

James Cameron ([05:03](#)):

Yeah. So yeah, the first call evolved out of Sask Energy and working with the other crowns in Saskatchewan, Sask Power Sastel, but really seeing the need for that first call. It is not a one call, it's not mandatory in Saskatchewan, although we've worked at that for a lot of years, but we're currently still a first call, but we could really see, again with those, our integrity programs, our awareness of damage. Third party damage really I guess began to crystallize over 20 years ago where we could see the value of this, try to help our landowners customers around, how do you communicate when they're doing excavation, how do you do this? And like you said, others around the country has already been doing it, so it didn't seem to want to take off outside on, its in Saskatchewan. So we felt like we needed to give it that push. So at Sask Energy, we took on the structure, the corporate, not-for-profit and housed it here, and also put resources towards the mapping and answering calls and that sort of thing. And that's really how it took off.

Mike Sullivan ([06:19](#)):

Like you said, it doesn't take off right away. Once you have the core members, then you have that buy-in, and then you're working on your marketing and you're bringing in more and more members. And Lisa, that's really a lot of where you come in is working with the existing members, but you're always recruiting and you're always working with your members. That member services aspect. Tell me a little bit about that. I mean, you're fairly new, just ask First Call, but it's a different dynamic today than it was for your predecessors.

Lisa Kosolofski ([06:48](#)):

You're absolutely right, and there's so many ways that we can be educating, reaching out, recruiting, and I think one of the things that I say to my board all the time is we're sort of reaping the benefits of the work that has been done before us and those to come on the board and in positions will be reaping

the benefits of the work we're doing now because it is an ongoing sort of momentum. And we started with just SaaS energy in the very beginning in 2003, and now we have over 125 subscribing companies. And that's a pretty big feat, especially since a lot of those companies they've merged, they've taken on smaller companies in Saskatchewan, and we have a lot of companies with that cross border facilities. So it's kind of neat to be working alongside other provinces to see what they're doing. But not only that, to take that foundation that Sask energy built and move forward and social media, we've got YouTube videos, these education pieces that are so crucial, and that's where the SCGA really has helped us elevate that message, not only of education, public awareness, but that recruitment piece where we're educating people on why it's so important to protect their infrastructure.

[\(07:58\)](#):

And not only that, but to tell their friends, to protect their infrastructure, but also they're doing any ground disturbance to be calling or clicking before they big.

Mike Sullivan [\(08:07\)](#):

Now, James, you're more of the SCGA side now you've been there for nine years, and just recently the SCGA, the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance and Sask first call came together, and that's been a little bit of a trend. I think Quebec was the first one in Canada, and then about, is it three or four years ago? We did that in Alberta and now for us in Alberta, and I guess for Quebec as well, was the one call side sort of absorbing the CGA, whereas in Saskatchewan it was vice versa, right?

James Cameron [\(08:41\)](#):

That's correct. Yeah. Yeah. And we talked to both yourself and Quebec and even Manitoba to some extent, which kind of has a different hybrid model. But yeah, we really wanted to, when Sask Energy came to SCGA to see if we were willing to take this role on, and it was not part of their core business anymore, so it did make sense when they found somebody that could be a custodian over this entity, I think they were quite happy to find us. So we did a lot of, I think we took about a year and a half of back and forth somewhat. It was understanding if the SCGA really wanted to get into this role and making sure that we had the commitment of the board at the SCGA and that we had the commitment of the membership. I think there's so many synergies that we could identify and so many positives out of the combination of the two that it made sense, but we wanted to do our own due diligence and make sure that it did make sense.

[\(09:49\)](#):

And so we went through the whole thing, had a membership meeting to make sure that we had endorsement from the SCGA and then proceeded with the acquisition of SaaS First Call. Subsequent to that, we set up a independent board that is diverse across memberships from SaaS First Call to make sure that we had a good diverse kind of guidance going forward. It's more of a, we lean on Alberta to help with a lot of the day-to-day activities, but just to make sure we had good governance and make sure that we had a good plan going forward. And so far, it's been an exciting road, but a challenging road, but I think we're over that hump now and we're onto good things now.

Mike Sullivan [\(10:36\)](#):

Well, I think what you've done also, whether you realize it or not, you're proving once again, there's no one way to do this, right? There's multiple ways to do this, and it was one of my colleagues whom I used to work with says, all roads lead to Walmart, just pick one. And he was absolutely right. And this is a great testament, a perfect example of, no, let's turn it on its head here. And I think what Saskatchewan

did was brilliant because what it does, it provides the province with the ability to keep its own boots on the ground. If you understand what I'm getting at, you're not looking at, we have, okay, we have a utility safety partners contact center providing the day-to-day locate request notification process. Well, it's becoming more and more just an online type of thing, so you don't need that bricks and mortar anymore.

[\(11:33\)](#):

But when you get to the point of education awareness, best practices, any of the other committees under the Common Ground Alliance, you need the boots on the ground. You can't be looking to your neighbors. Let's face it, we are the best at stealing ideas. Nothing is sacred. If I could duplicate the Saskatchewan contractor breakfast, I would, but you need that boots on the ground. And you look back, Derek, you've had that mainstay with Sask Energy and Sask Power and SaskTel for so long, and even though now you've migrated away from the crowns that were governing, I guess the sask first call side, it's nothing has changed from the people like myself. Look on the outside looking in, nothing has changed. And do you find that inside as well?

James Cameron [\(12:34\)](#):

Yeah, I think it's a great, it ended up being a great relationship. As James said, it took a lot of work for him and a lot of others to get there. But from a Sask energy lens, I think we felt like we started a great thing, but we're at a point where we are really adding a lot more or could others add more where it's more, we try to be very inclusive. We are looking at all the subscribers, but having it outside of SaaS energy proper is a way to really make sure you've got that. James has an awesome board put together to really again, have the, like you said, boots on the ground to really understand the nuances and what needs to be done. What I see too is a great linkage that's really been strong over a long period of time with Sask first Call in SCGA, there's always leveraged opportunities for advertising for events to be together.

[\(13:30\)](#):

This really just brings it even tighter. And you have someone like Lisa working with Shannon Doca, who is the executive director of SCGA, right? And now they're basically in the same group here. So those really start to build. And I think, yeah, that is something that's exciting. Like you said, right now the way we're operating is to get that transition there and hopefully you don't see a lot of changes, but there's a lot of great ideas in behind the scenes. I know Lisa and others are working on trying to bring out as we hear from those customers or our subscribers and really understand how we want to move forward. So I think, yeah, that's really exciting. And I think SaaS Energy is really excited to still be part of that. They have a seat on the new board as well as SaaS power, so we've kept some of that consistency so we're not just walking away from that 20 years, but we're also have a more diverse board of directors than we ever did before.

Mike Sullivan [\(14:27\)](#):

Lisa, do you find you have your subscribers, right? So the utility owners, but then you have the users, the excavating, the digging community, the heavy users or the casual users, and then right down to the homeowner who makes a locate request once every five years and maybe once in a lifetime to them. Do you think anything has changed? Do they actually realize that there's something different behind the curtain now, or is just business as usual?

Lisa Kosolofski [\(14:55\)](#):

Well, the great thing that we did when we switched over is we really did try to make it as least disruptive as possible for all of those people, the subscribers, the users, all of them. It took us a little while to switch over all the accounting and all of that stuff, the paperwork behind the scenes, but it's a great relationship and Shannon and I actually go way back too. So that was really serendipitous and has been really beneficial. We have a great working relationship, and she was manning the fourth at the beginning of this changeover and then handing it off to me. So that initial switch over, I think it was really not very disruptive at all. A lot of people have just, if anything, the feedback has been that it's a little more approachable, but I think that's just people's perception. I think, like Derek was saying, the relationship there with the Crowns is so wonderful.

[\(15:45\)](#):

They're in our corner, like you said, we have this common mission, and I would say there's many paths to happiness and like you said, many roads to Walmart. And so to just have that same mission of that Mission Zero. We work with WorkSafe as well, that Mission Zero, where there's no damages. Everyone's getting home safe, and the marketing side of me loves that. It's easy enough to do the scare tactics and to share those stories of tragedy or accidents, but it's something else to be able to say, everybody's getting home, everybody's getting those locates done. We haven't had any accidents. And that's where we're really headed. And I think we're all on the same on board with that same mission. And that's at the end of the day, the biggest thing that I think people are picking up on, and when we talk about the SCGA taking over, it's a no-brainer because they also have that mission of damage prevention. And as long as that core mission is there, I don't know that the users especially really, really care where it's coming from, as long as it's easy for them to get those locates done, which of course, as you know, we're always working to make it as efficient as possible for them.

Mike Sullivan [\(16:51\)](#):

Absolutely. That's the toughest part, and that's probably the best feedback you can get. Oh, I had no idea you guys had merge. I had no idea this was the thing. Oh, well good. I mean, that's good. We did a good job. Absolutely. James, you were right. And Derek too, but James as a board member and not a utility owner in a sense, right? You're coming at this looking at the governance and from what I recall and talking with Shannon before we talked about some ideas we could do cross province, and she said, Mike, I don't know if I can get the board, this is before unification or a transference of SaaS first called the SCGA. She says, Mike, I don't know if I can get the board The Crowns to do what you want to do is a multi-layers of approvals. And has it made SAS golf, SCGA more nimble by going down this path?

James Cameron [\(17:45\)](#):

I think to some extent, yeah. I think it's provided us the, it's not just the crown that is in control of it. So now we have, my company is a member or subscriber. We have assets in SaaS First Call. There's a number of others that are really, we have the same goal in mind, have the same objectives, and we can start to think outside of the box on how to bring in the message to the public and just provide some different perspectives to damage prevention and how to advance the efforts. So I think has, it's been a positive move for us.

Mike Sullivan [\(18:31\)](#):

And that's one of the things here I am, I've been with Alberta One call Utility Safety Partners now for 13 years, just had my 13th anniversary. I was going to stay five years and do something else, and here I am 13 years later. But what's been interesting, and I see it with the SEGA and SaaS First Call Quebec and elsewhere, nothing stays the same for very long. And the interesting part of that, I came from before the

One Call World was with Alliance Pipeline. Before that, the National Energy Board, the National Energy Board, the government, it moves at glacial speed. And it was really hard for a guy like me, I've always got some ideas. I'm always looking ahead and then you have this the let's throw some boundaries in Frontier. And so we'll slow things down to a crawl. Then I got into the private sector and oh, this is good, this is fast.

[\(19:26\)](#):

But with the notification centers, one call and we're small, we're nimbly make a decision. You implement it the next day almost in many cases, that's not wrong. That's actually happening. But this is interesting because without doing what Sask first call and the SCGA did, you might've been stuck in a little bit in that analysis paralysis, and now that's just not the case anymore. So in the tip of the hat, and that allows you, I think, to look at things like maybe legislation in a different way, a different lens. Where is the province now with legislation? The million dollar question? You can ask me the same thing. It changes by the day.

James Cameron [\(20:12\)](#):

Yeah, yeah, exactly. No, it's something we absolutely have top of mind. I think it's something we have, I'll say taken a run at multiple times and looked at it. I know Mike, yeah, I worked with you a few years back on what Alberta's doing. We've had those discussions about can we get something aligned, at least between Alberta and Saskatchewan that looks very similar to get to that One call? One call versus a first call. And currently, again, we're up for another election here in the of October in Saskatchewan. So those kinds of things, dapp in that a bit. So I would say we're very excited, and again, I think it gives us some time to put together what is the plan, how do we go after that again next year and see what can come of it. But

Lisa Kosolofski [\(21:04\)](#):

Absolutely, and I'll speak to that a little Derek too. I know it's one of the first pieces of feedback I received when I was hired on from users, from facility owners as well. It's like, when is this happening? I have 16 other phone calls I need to make after you guys. And unfortunately that's just where we're at right now. But it is very top of mind and we're looking to make headway. And even at some of the trade shows and things that Shannon and I have been doing either together or separately representing both the SDGA and Fast First Call, we're having those conversations. And as you know, Mike, that's how it starts. It starts with having those conversations, sharing the understanding that it's not just about dollars and cents, it's really about the time, the headaches, the customers, the injuries, the potential bigger costs that can really affect the voters when it comes down to it.

[\(21:56\)](#):

So it's something that's very high on my priority list as well. Now that this changeover and this foundation has happened and everything, like we've said, we're kind of getting into now where do we go from here? We've got that switchover handle, that's been a year. It's been a busy crazy year, but a wonderful year. Now where do we go from here and how do we bring that in? Because I think at the end of the day, it does save a lot of time, a lot of headache and a lot of potential damages in more ways than one.

Mike Sullivan [\(22:25\)](#):

I mean, legislation is such a dance, and it really feels that way when you're dealing with the government of the day and there's so many influencing factors and just when you think you've got it, it's like, oh, no,

something else comes up. And it's hard. I mean, as I tell my board members, be careful what you ask for because what we hand over to the government, and this is all the work we've done. We've gone through everything. We've dotted every J, we've crossed every seven, and here you go, here's the language that we can live with. And then what you get back, who knows, it may not be what you're thinking at all, but that's what you're going to have to live with now. And this is where the politicking piece comes out of, and you're very lucky you have these crown corporations that were part of SaaS First call and governing it for so long, they realize perhaps more than anybody that the legislation, the language, when you get the subject matter experts putting it together, listen to them. And this is so critical that they can now, if they're the top 10 influencers, for example, of the Saskatchewan, from a damage prevention perspective, they can talk to the government too and say, look, the language here is pretty solid. We can't stray from this. This is where I am at. It's, it is a dense and it changes all the time. Just to add

James Cameron ([23:47](#)):

To that, I think there's one really important bit that, again, I think it is very important. It's something we're not going to give up on, but I think we've done a great job. Our boards really went above and beyond to pull in other board members. To your point there just kind of sparked me of diversity in the board and having representation from indigenous folks for reserves. We had our first on reserve breakfast, safety breakfast, me this here, folks from RMS, because that's one of the struggles when you start to mandate a one call, I think one of the areas is RMS and the cost they perceive in there. And so leveraging, we've got some great RMS on board already, so it's like, can we leverage them? Can we get them more exposure and work with us to figure out how do we streamline so we don't have control over maybe how that legislation comes out or when it comes out or if it does.

([24:41](#)):

But really we do have control over how we engage with those subscribers, how we leverage the community. We have a very engaged community. So the more we can show, again, whether it's RMS or reserves or other groups that currently aren't part of our SaaS first call, the benefit there and the relatively low cost it does that we can help manage those calls and help organize those tickets, that sort of thing. I think it just shows there is real value there, and that's on us. We can just keep working. And I know Lisa's already thinking about all these kinds of improvements and what we can do there, but I just thought as you were talking about it, that really is another whole aspect that we don't want to sit here to say, well, it's not ever going to be a first call or one call, so we can't do much else. There's a lot of opportunities there.

Mike Sullivan ([25:39](#)):

Well, it sounds like it's given you ability to see around corners a little bit, right? I mean, when you're talking about the RMS and their influence, I mean, those are powerful organizations. I think you have Sarm in Saskatchewan, which is the very powerful organization, and if you get them on side, that's enormous. I mean, we're having the same conversations here, smaller municipalities, some are villages. They're the ones that have the most concern. So we don't have the wherewithal, we don't have the funding, the resources to find all of our infrastructure, and we are trying to become very creative in how we are able to manage that. So are you finding that too, Lisa as well?

Lisa Kosolofski ([26:18](#)):

Yeah, that conversation, we did this arm trade show here in town, and I had that conversation with a lot of RMS counselors and things like that, and talking to them about, we got to start somewhere, like you said, it's a dance, and we have to take that first step. And I know that again, that's where the legislation

gets a little tricky because how do you mandate something that maybe isn't known, right? A lot of these places have things in the ground that aren't tracked or traced or were put in decades ago when technology wasn't as in depth as it is now. But I do believe we have to start somewhere, and that's the conversations that we're having. And in talking with a lot of these firms, the argument there is really that I'm recognizing they spend a lot of money on administrative costs to protect their infrastructure as it is. And coming at it from that sort of sales point or pitch is the benefits of having us sort of manage that a one-stop shop. And that's the hope, right? That's the vision.

Mike Sullivan ([27:22](#)):

Have you been following other podcasts of similar ilk to the safety moment? I've got one for you. Wildfires, floods, and Chaos Communications. This is a gentleman who joined us recently, Tim Conrad, and you'll hear personal stories from the front lines, lessons from past emergencies, insights on preparations and training recounting the intense, for example, the intense 2023 British Columbia wildfire season, 10,000 evacuees in that last season, thefts sabotage of firefighting equipment protests, nearly 300 destroyed or damaged structures, learn how they navigated the challenges of crisis communications, compounded by a ban on news and the declining of impact of Canadian news media. This podcast explores effective strategies for managing misinformation, coordinating resources, and maintaining public trust during wildfires and floods. Interesting stuff. So we hope you'll listen to Tim Conrad's Wildfires, floods and Chaos Communications

[\(28:30\)](#):

And Leveraging Province to Province, whether it's operations or legislation or the common ground alliance work that we're doing is becoming more, it's really becoming borderless in some regards, right? We keep our boots on the ground when you have to maintain that relationship with your users and the stakeholders, but the borders, the silos are really being broken down everywhere else. We've seen that from the contract we have with Pelican Corp, for example, on our one call software, one call access Western Canada with one license or four provinces, which is very unique before you dig partners. That's who we are, and we're starting to see that in other areas now of the committee work, the saskatche, sorry, the Common Ground Alliance committee work. Who would want to take that on? Just to talk about the Common Ground Alliance committees. I mean, there's a lot of work going on. Best practice. It all bubbles up to the national best practice with the CCGA. Who would want to talk about that a little bit? Because those, anyway, that's my perception. Yeah, I

James Cameron ([29:34](#)):

Think there's just amazing work committee. That's what we're very proud of. Always. Ever since I've joined, we've had these strong, what I feel is very strong committee work around best practices for sure. We've got a backlog of people wanting to join in and be part of those best practice committees, which is not typical, I would think, to have that much interest and excitement about best practices. But it's there, right? They're always come up with improvements, how to make different aspects better, all that sort of thing. And then we have an education and awareness work group as well. And again, just amazing. They're the ones getting involved in these breakfasts. You had mentioned for the people out there that don't realize what Saskatchewan has is this last year we did 22 breakfasts around the province. It's a free breakfast for education and awareness. So we bring in people that do excavation, we bring in the utility owners or the asset owners in, and we have a little session.

[\(30:38\)](#):



In the meantime, they get fed and it seems to be just a great relationship. We move them around the province based on feedback. So we've had a few examples where last year was the first year a certain town had that, and they were so excited after they saw how it worked, they said, you got to come back. And they on their own, went out and doubled the membership that came out. And so again, we feel like the facilitator of that, but absolutely. And we got some areas that maybe don't have as much interest and we try to promote it, and maybe that's somewhere where we move away from the next year. But it's amazing to see the level of interest. Covid obviously put a dent in that for a few years, and we're just kind of getting back to some real in place breakfast. Another quick little thing that we came up with is a youth ground disturbance training.

[\(31:30\)](#):

So we saw a gap in the market of there's this training that's out there. Absolutely. Once you're in the workplace, there's training, there's providers that's really well done and they're involved in our best practices. There's that give and take of improving that, but we saw for someone new coming out, they have no idea what they're getting into there. So we provided again, a free, we got a sponsorship on that and some money, and we provide a free online course for youth. Anyone can take it, but it's pretty much targeted at use so that they have something when they're going out to get their first job, they have that understanding. I need to be making a first call. I understand some of the consequences around using heavy equipment and digging, all those sort of things. And that's had a great feedback and we're heavily promoting that, and it seems to be going really well.

Mike Sullivan [\(32:17\)](#):

How many, I heard the number and maybe one of you guys knows how many contractors went through the Saskatchewan breakfast this year?

James Cameron [\(32:25\)](#):

20,

Mike Sullivan [\(32:26\)](#):

I think it was over like 3,500 or something. Yeah,

James Cameron [\(32:28\)](#):

I think it

Lisa Kosolofski [\(32:28\)](#):

Was around 20. Shannon would have that number. Shannon's

James Cameron [\(32:30\)](#):

Baby. We just had it. James, on our update there, mine's gone blank. 2200, I think. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I think that's pretty close. Yeah,

Mike Sullivan [\(32:42\)](#):

That's impressive. I don't know where I got 35, but that's impressive. 2200 contractors. And I was at the event in Lloydminster the last couple of years. I was there a few, well weeks ago, a month ago I guess now. And when whoever asks, okay, who put your hand up your first time here? And a lot of people put

their hands up, and that's probably the same everywhere you go. You have people with your hands up. And I said at the top of our episode, if there's something I could emulate, if something I like to steal, boy, that would be it. And it's impressive. It's doable. Every province should strive to do the same. And Saskatchewan has been doing this for what, close to 30 years I think. Yes.

James Cameron ([33:26](#)):

Yeah, something like that. It's pretty amazing. We've got such a dedicated team to roll that out. We have little sub teams around the province and each of them take five, eight different breakfasts and they roll those out. And again, the dedication to do that and the logistics and everything else that comes with it, but they absolutely love it. They encourage our board members to come out and see them. And it's kind of neat to hear from our newer board members have never seen this before. They're just like, yeah, that

Lisa Kosolofski ([33:53](#)):

Was me. I went at as breakfast and Shannon said, just show up and shake hands and network and promote. And it's like, are you sure I can't help? And it runs so smoothly. And Mike, you were talking about the attendance and the fascinating thing that we've found in sort of our post breakfast marketing wrap up is that so much of it is word of mouth. It's just people saying, you got to go to this and bring in their buddies and bring in their colleagues and telling their friends and the quality of the video that we create, the presentation, as Derek kind of mentioned, it's all done locally in Saskatchewan by Saskatchewan companies and the education, the quality of the education pieces that to actually engage the audience. They're not just coming for the breakfast and then hitting the road. They're learning something and they're taking these video snippets and sharing them at their safety meetings, or we call them little toolbox talks that they can share when they're getting together. And it's something that kind of just lasts long after April Dig save month is done.

James Cameron ([34:54](#)):

And I think since Covid too, we've had seen such a turnover in the workforce as well. So having those first timers come out I think is really important. And it's really something that we've been focusing on trying to educate the new people that are working in the industry and in the construction industry and everything else. So it's great to see, and we started doing it. I think we never used to do that years ago, but it was something that we really want to track and see the new people coming out every year. And it's, the number's been growing, and I think it's just from word of mouth, it's almost becoming, it's a good first safety meeting or whatever, and in the spring kickoff with new workers coming on board to get that idea out there, right?

Mike Sullivan ([35:39](#)):

Oh, and for sure, I mean, I was part of it years ago when I worked with Alliance Pipeline, and it's just evolved and it's like a well-oiled machine and here comes spring, here comes the contractor breakfast. And I'm sure everybody who attends who's been there before is anticipating it. And as you said, Lisa, the word of mouth, there's no better sales than word of mouth because you're hearing it from somebody who thinks this is the best thing we could possibly do. And this year, this past year, a couple of months ago, we had our first foray into the breakfast as well. I think we did seven or eight and far cry from the 20 some odd that Saskatchewan's doing. But we want to build on it every year. And a lot of our members are Saskatchewan members and they see the benefit of the Saskatchewan contractor breakfast. There's no reason, Mike, why we can't do this here in Alberta. No, there isn't. But apparently there is. I don't know what the magic potion is. We need Shannon,

Lisa Kosolofski ([36:37](#)):

We need Shannon Doca.

Mike Sullivan ([36:38](#)):

We need Shannon. Well, we have a Cassie now, and Cassie is really all, she's very great. Yeah, she's awesome. You want something done, give it to the busy person. They're busy for a reason and they get things done, and that's certainly Cassie. So we're going to keep pushing that every year. We want to add more, we want to add more, and you are happy

James Cameron ([36:57](#)):

To join. Think that Lloyd one join was a

Mike Sullivan ([36:58](#)):

Great one. We've done some

James Cameron ([37:00](#)):

Panels during that. That's a lot of fun. It's been a bit of an experiment on its own to try to try out some different things. But this last year, yeah, I think it was 2200 participants. That's down a little bit since pre covid. But again, I think the mix has improved. So there was 12 different cities involved there. We had 99 RMS show up, 45 towns, seven villages, so smaller communities, that sort of thing. So really a lot of diversity there. 500 different companies. So yeah, the numbers maybe are down a little bit from pre covid, but I think again, we got a really good base to build that up again. And I like what Lisa said about the, we don't just let them walk away. We give them some of those YouTube videos and we snippet them up so that they're handy to use throughout the year. And then sharing a lot of the, even the CCGA information around, again, best practices, QR codes, here's some little cards you can take, put in your excavator, put in your vehicle reminders, those sort of things. So yeah, it's quite an event. A little

Lisa Kosolofski ([38:12](#)):

Swag too. You got to do the giveaways, right? The giveaways. People love it. Our dirt flavored lip balm,

Mike Sullivan ([38:18](#)):

Swag never hurts, man. Swag doesn't hurt. Everybody loves it. My house is full of it from years gone by too. Absolutely. What are one of the toughest things you're facing right now? What's one of the biggest challenges Saskatchewan is facing, probably like everybody else, but I want to hear from you, James, what are you seeing as some of the biggest challenges right now?

James Cameron ([38:39](#)):

I think it's probably getting back into, I think growing the message. Like Derek said, we are down a little bit in numbers. I think that's one of the challenges is to try and get back to where we got to and just educating. Like I said before, there has been a huge turnover through the downturn and turn of covid that there's a lot of new people working in different industries. A lot of experienced people have left construction industry have gone on to something else. And utilities too, and utilities too. So it's getting that reeducation out there. They can't just assume that people know what's going on and that have that knowledge base or that sort of thing. So I think it's just the education part and getting back to where we were.

Mike Sullivan ([39:32](#)):

What do you think, Lisa, what are some of the challenges from your perspective?

Lisa Kosolofski ([39:36](#)):

I know for me, I think coming on with fresh eyes, which is always a great thing, it's been really eyeopening to work with the other provinces and to meet up with them. And I find Saskatchewan a little bit of a unique beast because we have a wide variety, especially when it comes to users. We do have those contractors, we have those subscribing companies that are pretty adept at clicking and drawing their maps and any update, they adapt quite well. But we also have one of the largest, if you look at the national numbers, the largest amount of homeowners submitting requests. And so trying to please and appease both of them and make our online system capable to handle that and to make that experience as user-friendly as possible to really encourage that online submission because Mike, as you know, those numbers are always better when they go online.

([40:27](#)):

That's been kind of a challenge for me as far as how do we reach these farmers in the middle of nowhere? Saskatchewan is such a beautiful, big, wide open space. How do we get this message out there? And these breakfasts are such a key part of that, which is why this collaboration, this ownership of the SCGA with SaaS first call now is such a wonderful opportunity. But that's one of the challenges that I think I'm facing when it comes to marketing and recruiting and getting that message out there. Public awareness committees talking constantly about how do we reach these farmers who they're pretty stubborn, they like things the way they like things and they like to do things old school and how do we get them online? How do we get them watching these videos and learning and taking these courses and things like that. That's one of the challenges that I think is, I'm up for sure, but definitely something we're working at.

Mike Sullivan ([41:20](#)):

How about you, Derek? What are you thinking? Yeah,

James Cameron ([41:22](#)):

I think there's always challenges really trying to get to that zero. The ultimate goal is no line hits. And you look at the volume we still get today and the lack of reach. We still do all these great things and yet every well provincially, every day there's someone hitting utilities, doing damage. And you have those conversations with those individuals and most of the time it's like, oh, I didn't realize. Sometimes it's based out of speed and thought they knew what was going on. But that's the challenge of trying to figure out where we haven't hit yet. It's all great, all the positives we talked about, but we got to spend a lot of our time in these, how to crack that nut, how to get more, how to get everyone online, how to get more subscribers on that side, and then having all the excavators actually use the service. I think that's the number one for me,

Mike Sullivan ([42:23](#)):

And it blows my mind. Here we are. Alberta one Call USP has been around for 40 years and Saskatchewan first call has been around for 20 plus years across the country. We've all been doing this for a very, very long time. And then I'll hear from one of my members, it was so actively engaged and driving that message forward and to Mission Zero, if you will. And they'll say, Mike, 40% of the damages we have are no locates today. How is that possible? If we were to take all of our members, whether it's

TC Energy, Enbridge, and SaaS Energy, all of them across the country combine the dollar amount of their awareness programs. Coupled with our own, we're looking at millions and millions of dollars. And yet somebody says, I had no idea. I mean, it doesn't compute in this day and age when you've got mobile devices and you've got billboards and you've got online, you've got everything going for you.

(43:24):

And I didn't know, I'm sorry. You own a shovel. You need to know. I find that so frustrating. Or like as you said, Derek, the speed, well, there was a locate delays and I need to get it done. Well, the shame on you. Yeah, we dig eight months of the year and we throw 12 months of digging into that eight months. So there's going to be delays work with us here. We're doing everything we can. That's the unfortunate part of it. But going back on a positive note is the vehicles you have at your disposal, we all have our disposal to work on something like say legislation for example, and whether it's social media or your websites or print media to a degree, radio advertising, but nothing beats that word of mouth. And as you were saying earlier, and that's again, I don't want to pump the tires too hard of that contractor breakfast, but he can't help it because what a perfect venue.

(44:28):

If you're working on something as critical as legislation, which is going to be a long and arduous project, and you have that face time face-to-face with people about legislation, having very real conversations about, well, here's where we're at today. Here's where we're at about a week ago, and things have changed. I can't underline the benefit of that enough. And we want to keep emulating that in Alberta. So tip of the hat to you guys for doing that tip of the hat for the work you've done with the SCGA and SaaS First call coming together. I love how we do this in Canada and Western Canada particularly. We have this before you dig partners, we've all come together to really rework the process in terms of we don't need these silos anymore. We have one software, one system, one approach, one license for four provinces, and we split the cost accordingly. We're all saving money on this. We're all saving resources to put it towards education awareness. And when I look at the number of notification centers, one call centers across the us, that's where unfortunately, legislation doesn't allow it. If we had legislation, I don't think we would've been able to do what we've done, and that's a concern. So this other thing in the back of my mind, if we get legislation, that's great, but what did we give up? I don't even know. I don't even know.

Lisa Kosolofski (45:56):

Another podcast down the road.

Mike Sullivan (45:58):

Yeah, exactly. Another podcast down the road is right. Yeah. Anyway, folks, thanks for joining me today. I really appreciate it. It's kind of fun having more people on the podcast and just one or two. So thanks for joining me and I hope you'll promote this on your channels as well. I know we will, and I look forward to doing a lot more with Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance with you, Lisa, and with Shannon and everybody with the SCGA. It's been a lot of fun. One person can't achieve a lot, but together we can achieve anything. And this is a perfect example. Thank you so much for your time.

Lisa Kosolofski (46:31):

Yeah, absolutely. Thanks Mike. Thanks for having us.

Derrick Mann (46:33):

This transcript was exported on Jun 18, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Thanks very Much.

Mike Sullivan ([46:36](#)):

That's going to wrap things up on the Safety Moment podcast. I want to thank our producer, Doug Downs at Stories and Strategies, and I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any director you're listening on. And please do leave us a rating. It helps. You can follow us on X. Let's face it, it's Twitter. It'll always be Twitter at Utility Safety, and we're also on Instagram and Facebook. If you'd like to send us a note, maybe you have an episode idea or, Hey, here's something new. Maybe you want to sponsor the Safety Moment Podcast. Email us at [info@utilityafety.ca](mailto:info@utilityafety.ca) and put podcast in the subject header. I'm Mike Sullivan, president of Utility Safety Partners. Click to know what's above and below. One click costs you nothing. Not clicking could cost you everything.