

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. This is our season, I don't know what season is it? Four or five. But anyway, episode number 64 and Doug Downs tells me it's season four, season four, episode number 64, and this is going to be our season wrap up. And first and foremost, I want to thank everybody who does tune into the podcast and listens on a regular basis. We certainly appreciate that this began, literally, it began as a covid project. What do we do with ourselves during Covid? We couldn't go out, we couldn't meet with people in person. We couldn't do a variety of things that we normally did. And Doug Downs reached out to me, he says, Mike, what about a podcast? I thought, Hey, what the hell? Let's give it a shot. And here we are. Four years later, the world has gotten back to normal, thankfully.

([01:03](#)):

And what we've done here is we've gone back to doing everything we did pre covid meeting in person and having our symposiums, attending conferences, delivering presentations, going to trade shows, having the ambassadors be part of that whole project again, of promoting awareness and education. And we've also included doing things we learned to do during covid, like this podcast. And here we are, episode number 64. So again, thanks for the listeners for joining me and on a regular basis, thank you also to the guests we've had this year in the previous years. It's been an interesting journey. And I was asked the other day, well, Mike, will you continue with the podcast? And I did hesitate for a minute. I thought, well, how do you stop? I don't think you can stop. And I'm loud to say, I don't think we should. This is a new medium of promoting awareness of being out there. I say out there using air quotes and talking to people about what's important for safety and the excavating, the digging community or preventing contacts with overhead power lines. This is just one more way of doing it.

Announcer ([02:15](#)):

You know what, everybody has their preferred style of how they want to receive or respond to a message. I was in Subway the other day and they have their list of here's our top 15 sandwiches. I didn't like any of them. None of them. I didn't want any. I always, Nope. I have the Turkey sub on brown. That's it. But the point is, I'm sure they're right that on aggregate people are ordering from that top 15 list. I just happen to be one of the ones that doesn't like that.

Mike Sullivan ([02:47](#)):

Doesn't like that. Exactly. You want

Announcer ([02:48](#)):

Something else. Exactly. Everybody has their own preferred style. So do you need a newsletter? Yeah, you do. Do you need an email campaign? You probably do. Do you need social media? Absolutely. You do. Now YouTube, you and I should talk a little bit, but

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

Yeah, we have a channel. We do have our YouTube channel, you have the

Announcer ([03:05](#)):

Channel, and then podcasts. There are people like you and me who just want to put our earbuds in our ears and shut the world up for half an hour,

Mike Sullivan ([03:16](#)):

Whether you're out driving somewhere on a walk or working out or whatever the case may be. You want to listen to something that interests you or, Hey, I heard about this podcast and you really should hear this guy talk about, or this gal talk about whatever there is you're talking about. I've stopped listening to radio pretty much over the last couple of years, and I just listened to podcasts. If I'm driving a longer distance, that's what I do. And even though for a walk mind you, I tend not to do that as much as I was. I like just hearing what's around me. And then you can hear the bike bells obviously when they're going past you a little better. But just doing more of everything. And my firm belief after decades of looking at public awareness programs and what works and what doesn't, I firmly believe you have to be firing on all cylinders, period. Safety

Announcer ([04:09](#)):

Needs to be in every conversation on every channel.

Mike Sullivan ([04:12](#)):

You have to look at all the data. Of course. I mean, no, we're not doing billboards anymore and they've had their day. You have to look at a number of impressions and that's a key part of it. But you also have to be, again, firing on all cylinders. And the podcast, the Safety Moment podcast is certainly doing that for

Announcer ([04:32](#)):

Us. Well,

Mike Sullivan ([04:32](#)):

And if they look at a billboard,

Announcer ([04:34](#)):

What is that? Half a second. One second. Okay, let's give them two seconds. Wow. That caught their attention with each one of your podcast episodes, folks are going 30, 40 minutes.

Mike Sullivan ([04:44](#)):

No, for sure.

Announcer ([04:45](#)):

Set that up. Right. Let's count it in time instead of numbers.

Mike Sullivan ([04:50](#)):

We passed a milestone a week ago, a week and a day ago, actually October 1st, 1984. Alberta One Call Corporation received and processed. Its very first locate request 40 years ago, October 1st. And here we are, well over 10 million locate requests later, 40 years later. Who could have imagined then if we could

go back in time and interview somebody from that day? The pride they felt, we've launched the amount of effort to launch Alberta One call in the years preceding. They had to incorporate, they had to do, bring all the funding in to get it going. Pennsylvania, actually, they ran Alberta one call out of Pennsylvania for a couple of years. Really? Yeah, before we did it here, we didn't have the resources here. And you talk to those people. Actually there is one, a couple of guys who are still around. You talk to them, you say, Hey, did you have any idea what it might be?

[\(05:47\)](#):

10 years later, 20, 30, 40 years. And nobody did. Let's face it. We can't look ahead and say, oh, it's going to be like this in 20, 30, 40 years. But without that, we wouldn't be doing what we're doing today. It's the evolution of the entire organization, let alone damage prevention and let alone the digging community's engagement with what we're doing would never have been foreseen to be where it is today at all. So here we are interesting 40 years later, and then I look at our website here, our webpage for the Safety Moment podcast and the number of episodes we've recorded is impressive. I have to admit, I'm a little surprised. 64 episodes later and it stays fresh. And the first couple of years we were really pushing content out and then the last year or so we've had actually people reaching out to us, Hey, can we be on your podcast? Can we be a guest? And absolutely we'd like that. And to bring people in and talk to them. It's been really an enjoyable experience. And

Announcer [\(06:54\)](#):

You've managed to do episodes that are beyond your day to day as well. I think of the curse of Oak Island.

Mike Sullivan [\(07:01\)](#):

Yeah,

Announcer [\(07:02\)](#):

The episode you did with one of the producers of, I think it was one of the producers.

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

Yeah, it was. And talking to that person, well actually we did two episodes now, the Curse of Oak Island, and one of them was the person who does all the diving right around Oak Island. And again, just knowing what's below, not knowing what's below in that case, what really there's

Announcer [\(07:26\)](#):

The tie in.

Mike Sullivan [\(07:26\)](#):

Yeah, I love that. And the other one that always comes back to me as a gentleman who was building, adding onto his home in the Ottawa area, and he found a sword from the British military. That's right. Going back a couple of hundred years. And then we also interviewed somebody from the caves of Moose Jaw, right. And then the Al Capone years, the rum running years of that where Al Capone was doing that through Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan put that on the map. If you've never been there and you're driving through, I highly recommend it. We did it. They do a great job. They, it's a theatrical type of experience and it's a lot of fun. They go through the whole bringing you underneath the streets of

Moose Jaw into those caves and they show you what it was like. And they have character actors doing all that.

[\(08:20\)](#):

It's a lot of fun. So we ever get the chance to do it. Please do. But we've had fun like that. And then we've had some real serious ones. We've had people on like Cliff Myle talking to us about what happened to him, the US Olympian and Cliff has become a very good friend of ours over the years with many, many US states, one call centers and Canadian, one call centers notification centers because he's such an engaging guy and he walks the talk literally after a horrific injury that could have been avoided. And we've had people like that on, and we're going to have more. We're going to keep doing this and meeting with people and talking about things that are important. Earlier this year, we had our 40th anniversary, which we celebrated at the BA Springs Hotel in February or earlier this year, marked a significant time in our Alberta damage prevention history marking the day that we launched Alberta we that Alberta One call was launched. It wasn't me, but what an honor to be that person. I mean, I won't be there for the 50th and it'll be somebody else, but I hope they honor it just as heavily and as hard as we did. It was an important milestone, not just for Alberta, but for Canada. We were the first one call center in Canada.

Announcer [\(09:44\)](#):

And what a neat community that's been built up around, well, not just around it, but around excavation and safe digging and as well as look up, look up to live. Where's the line? You had people from Australia come to Banff. Of course, Ontario, across the United States. It's a neat community of people.

Mike Sullivan [\(10:01\)](#):

No, we're lucky in that regard. That mean, obviously celebrating in Banff doesn't hurt. Right at the Ba Springs Hotel, which and iconic

Announcer [\(10:08\)](#):

Place in the depths of February, that

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

Was

Announcer [\(10:11\)](#):

The time everybody, especially those Aussies, they wanted to come and experience the coolish

Mike Sullivan [\(10:17\)](#):

Weather. Oh yeah. And well, I know that cookie couldn't get over how cold it really was when he first got here in the midst of a Chinook and it was beautiful out. And he goes, wow, it's pretty cold. Just wait. Just you wait. It's going to get really cold. And then he embraced it, mind you. And we drove out to Bev. He came with me and a bit of a snowstorm on the way there and ice and everything. And he's like, wow, this is pretty horrific. So this is nothing. But yeah, thanks. You're driving with an experienced guy here. But that was fun. We really marked that event with some great presentations and speakers from, as you said, from different parts of the world. And we also marked it with a really fun retro night, which was still being talked about eighties. Eighties night, man. Yeah, it was a lot of fun. The band was over the top and we had a great time.

Announcer ([11:13](#)):

Will you just tell Cookie that those frigid temperatures we find it keeps the bugs down.

Mike Sullivan ([11:18](#)):

There's not a lot of

Announcer ([11:19](#)):

Bugs that's quite the same size

Mike Sullivan ([11:21](#)):

In the winter. No, they don't. Nor does anything else except the bears, which he was really concerned about too. I was like, you're not going to see any bears. Not this time of year.

Announcer ([11:28](#)):

How was the digging season this

Mike Sullivan ([11:32](#)):

Year? The digging season? It was interesting. If we look at the data to date, and we're not done yet. We have another quarter to go, obviously, to get through the digging season. But we were looking at a slightly less locate requests this year than we have in previous years.

Announcer ([11:50](#)):

That could be the economy part of

Mike Sullivan ([11:52](#)):

It. It could be. I think during Covid we saw, well, during covid we saw a have much higher number of nothing else to do, but exactly, it was the honey do list was getting beat down every day, which was great. A lot of people were getting things done and they're doing it safely, which was great. This year we're seeing a bit of a decline, but it's also, I think a lot of the work that TELUS was doing with their pure fiber project is completed. So we saw a significant increase of locate request volume when they were in the midst of the high midst of that. And that's no longer, they're not doing as much of that anymore. They're still working on it, but not like they were.

([12:36](#)):

That's bringing the locate request probably down to the level that they would be normally without any major projects like that. That said, we also launched this year after two plus years of work, the alternate locate provider. And I think that's probably the story of the year for 2024, was finally launching the alternate locate provider, the A LP, and that we've had a couple of podcasts dedicated to that one, to that topic. And that from what everybody is talking about, since Alberta one call was launched 40 years ago, the A LP, the alternate locate provider is probably the biggest story since Alberta one call was launched in terms of damage prevention and change. And you mean arguably, I think shifting from calls to clicks is just as big of a story

([13:32](#)):

That if we hadn't done that, we might not have gotten to where we are with other things. For example, mandating low-key requests in the web a couple of years ago for members and contractors. But the A LP, that is a game changer. There's no question about it. The first month it was launched, almost 10% of the LOCATE requests it came in, went through the A LP, which was far exceeded anybody's expectations. Yeah. The data we have just yesterday, we now have 103 individual locators that are approved or registered to deliver locates under the alternate locate provider option. And that is a key message there too. It's an option. So the excavator decides, well, do I want to go the conventional route, the one we always have had in place, or do they want to go to the A LP option? And it's up to them and they decide. So having a hundred, when I asked this question to one of our members, Ian Stables, who's been a guest on the podcast a couple of times talking about the A LPI asked them, when have we ever, in the history of our damage prevention here in Alberta, when have we ever had an additional a hundred locators part of performing locates in Alberta? Never. We never have. So yes, it's a game changer. And that brings us back to another topic, which is related than legislation.

[\(15:06\)](#):

We've perhaps never been closer to securing legislation here in Alberta. Comprehensive legislation, you

Announcer [\(15:12\)](#):

Mean mandatory?

Mike Sullivan [\(15:13\)](#):

Mandatory, yeah. You shall be a member, you shall register your assets with utility safety partners, and prior to every excavation you'll submit a locate request. Those are the two critical pieces. Now, there's a lot more to it than that obviously, but those are the two critical pieces. And right now, unless you're governed by transmission pipeline regulations working within a hundred feet of those pipelines, you have to submit a locate request outside of that. You don't have to, which is problematic obviously.

[\(15:46\)](#):

So we want to make that mandatory. But the argument or the discussion, which is completely valid is could we have done something like the A LP, like the alternate locate provider in a regulated legislated environment? And the answer is we don't know. Honestly, we don't know. Could we have done it the way we did? No, probably not. Probably not. And that's the worry. That's the worry about going down the legislative path. Do we lose that autonomy? Do we lose the ability to be as flexible and nimble as we are? And the answer is we might. But do we, I can't say for certain that we would. I believe there's a different way to get through that legislative rigidity. But that's a challenging thing. You have to have a very strong government relations management.

Announcer [\(16:51\)](#):

There's where I was going to go. How are you going to speak with government? Because Lord knows we don't want government running no anything.

Mike Sullivan [\(16:59\)](#):

And they don't want to either. Right? I mean, let's face it, they don't want to either. The UCP government has said, we want to eliminate red tape. If they were going to go down the path and take it on, well, that would be completely counter to what they're saying. So then how

Announcer [\(17:16\)](#):

Are you going to ensure you have the resources to make sure the right messaging is provided to whatever government is in place? You've got an election coming up in a couple of years here.

Mike Sullivan ([17:27](#)):

Yeah, well, that's just did, right? And I can't go into too much detail because this is a matter before the board, and this is the board's prerogative. Yes. It's an operations objective to secure legislation until the board says otherwise. This is a governance matter. So this is where I will serve at the pleasure of the board and carry out their mandate. And the board's aware, we've gotten very far down the legislative rabbit hole, but there's this concern that we have achieved what we did

Doug Downs ([18:06](#)):

With

Mike Sullivan ([18:06](#)):

The A LP for example, or even other things like shifting calls to clicks. Could we have done that in a legislative environment? Perhaps not. If you look at the Ontario one call legislation, like the actual language, which is only going back 12 years to 2012 in the language, they are required to have an office in Northern Ontario. Now we are. That's

Announcer ([18:29](#)):

Exactly the kind of thing a government does. Yes.

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

And it was completely with the best intentions. Nobody did that. To create this anvil that you have to keep dragging

Announcer ([18:43](#)):

Northern Ontario having lived there is massive by the way. It is it like a 14 hour drive distance?

Mike Sullivan ([18:48](#)):

That's right. It's

Announcer ([18:50](#)):

Massive. From just east to west. Nevermind north to South's. What is Northern Ontario? Bury and up.

Mike Sullivan ([18:56](#)):

Well,

Announcer ([18:57](#)):

Good lord. Yeah. It's a long ways. It's huge.

Mike Sullivan ([19:00](#)):

It's a massive, if you've never driven across Canada, when you're driving across Canada, you get to Ontario, it takes forever. Forever to Ontario.

Announcer ([19:08](#)):

Yeah. A big drive of that is the shield. You get to see the Canadian shield, which is, but anyway, I've diverted you from,

Mike Sullivan ([19:13](#)):

But anyway, so this is the thing, right? I mean that language of having an office in Northern Ontario was the best intentions, but here we are a couple of years later, and Alberta one call or utility safety partners, we don't even have an office anymore. And we haven't since we left our office in March, 2020 because of Covid and everybody works from home, we have ever since. There's been really no reason to push us back.

Announcer ([19:44](#)):

And that's the future. That is the

Mike Sullivan ([19:46](#)):

Future. And that happened in a heartbeat, right? I mean, we could have done that years before covid, years before the pandemic, but we didn't want to do it. This is going to be too erratic and way too crazy to do that. But here we are a couple of years later, and this is the concern about legislation is that will there be language within the legislation or the regulations that lock you in time and prevent you from doing things that we will maintain pace of technology. And that's the magic. If you can dance around the language of legislation and include verbiage or I don't like that word, it's not even a word. Include language that allows you to remain flexible and nimble. That's the key. That's the key. And it's hard. It's really hard. So will we get there? Don't know. It's something that we continue to wrestle with. We've achieved a great many things without legislation. I do know that no locate request damages continue to be at a level that doesn't really go down. It goes up and down a little bit, but doesn't go down dramatically. Would that reduce with legislation? That's an interesting question as well. I reached out to ([21:16](#)):

A bunch of my colleagues and I said, Hey, I've got this question for you. You have legislation in your state or wherever you might be that requires a person to submit a locate request. Has it reduced your damages? And those who replied to me all said no. And they also said, I don't want you to tell me. I don't want you to tell the people that you're speaking to who told you this because I'll get wrapped for this, but because I know you Mike, and we're friends, I'm going to tell you no, we have not seen reduction in damages. Now, have you also seen an increase in locate requests? Yeah, definitely. But the damages relative to locate requests has not gone down.

Announcer ([22:06](#)):

Okay, so what is that percentage? Is it 1% 0.5%? Do you know the percentage of damages to locate requests?

Mike Sullivan ([22:16](#)):

Yeah, we do. If you look at the Canadian Common Ground Alliance dirt report, the damage information reporting tool, it will show you the percentage of damages relative to notifications or locate requests. And Ontario does have, I believe, the lowest, and Alberta is not far behind. But again, the data is not perfect because you're only looking at damages that are reported and reporting is voluntary, right? I reached out to the CCGA couple of years ago and I said, I don't like this table because it's not really, it's



not normalized. I know that in Alberta we have close to 70, 70 entities reporting damages, but other provinces might have five or six. And so now they're just not getting the damages reported to the volume that we are in Alberta. So we look like a bunch of cowboys. They just dig anywhere you want.

Announcer ([23:20](#)):

Whereas it's the opposite. It's totally it.

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

So when you normalize that table with the influence of the submitters, Alberta was actually the lowest damages per capita or per locate request because we have so many submitters and that when I look at that, I say, well, okay, we're doing a lot of things right. We have reduced damages. The fact that we are able to have that many parties reporting damages to me tells me we've reached that trust with the digging community or whomever is reporting

Announcer ([23:54](#)):

Damages.

Mike Sullivan ([23:56](#)):

They trust that we're going to take the damages, damage reports and root cause analysis. We're going to create best practices that will hopefully reduce those causes and have better data the next year. So that tells me we're doing things in the right way and I have to give kudos where they belong. A lot of that was a result of the Alberta Common Ground Alliance before we unified

([24:19](#)):

Engaging the digging community and working with them to get where we're at today. So that, again, will it reduce damages? What I'm hearing is not likely. So it's tough. I come from an environment, my background being that regulatory environment with the National Energy Board where I worked for a decade before I went to the transmission pipeline industry. And then before I came here and I see the value of legislation, I see the value of regulation, but I have also seen and I experienced where the regulator, their value to the regulation or to the legislation is questionable. And so what I mean by that is you may have somebody who damaged a buried utility and they clearly did not do what they were supposed to do, and they're culpable for that damage. And maybe they've done things before that they didn't follow the law, and the regulator is reluctant to go to that party, the damage and say, we're going to have an administrative monetary penalty to you, or we're going to do something, talk to your insurance company that is really going to hit you in the pocketbook because you're a bad player.

([25:54](#)):

And that reluctance on behalf of the regulator creates this environment of, well, what's the point? Why do we have legislation if you're not going to do anything about it? The lack of teeth is a big factor. So there's so many edges to this. I mean, if we're going to have legislation, it's got to mean something. You have to have meaningful legislation. You have to have meaningful enforcement, you have to have meaningful penalties. A lot of that is going to be education awareness. That's always the first place. But if you don't have that enforcement ladder with the repeat offenders, then I agree with what's the point? Why are we going to have that?

Announcer ([26:35](#)):

As I listened to you, what stands out to me is that to this point, your growth has been, and your success points have all been very provable. The ROI has been externally facing more entities reporting damages. Clearly click before you dig, has completely taken over from call, and the public even is catching onto that.

Doug Downs ([26:59](#)):

But

Announcer ([26:59](#)):

Your next steps where whether you enter into a legislative or regulated world or not, which sounds like you will, but your next steps for the organization are less visible. It's how well you manage that interaction with whatever government is in place. So that sounds like your next challenge. Here

Mike Sullivan ([27:23](#)):

It is. And staying on the government's radar screen in that relationship mode is a big thing. I mean, you have to be there. You have to be constantly part of that community, if you will, to keep on their radar screen and finding the right mix to next steps. It's not easy. It's not easy. Even if that is your sole objective. There's so many moving parts all the time. I'm asked by board members, our costs for legislation are extensive. Yes, they are. Because it's always a moving target. It's shifting, it's moving back and forth. There's so many influencing factors outside of utility safety partners and opinions change all the time with the wind. And you have to skate with that. And I remember one of my uncles used to, I grew up in Quebec and the French environment as well, one of my uncles used to say about me, Mike Stern Snar.

([28:36](#)):

Mike is a skater. What he meant by that is, I will work with whatever's in front of me to get the objective done. The fact of the matter is you don't know what you got to work with. And every day is different. Every day is different. So whether it's me or somebody else in my role down the road that has to work with the government or has to work with parties to meet an objective, they have to be able to work with others and keep your eye on the solution, believe in it obviously, and find a way to get there. And while keeping everybody informed along the way, it's not easy. And that's a big part of my job is keeping people informed, but also maintaining an objective. And it's worthwhile. I mean, you have to enjoy what you're doing, obviously, but it's worthwhile. And we've had some great successes in Alberta with utility safety partners. And before that Alberta one call, I'm really proud of the people I work with. None of this would be possible without the people that I work with.

([29:55](#)):

Plain and simple, it just would not be possible with the people I work with. They bought into what we were going to do a long time ago. And if I come up with, Hey, what about this? And oh my God, the eyes roll and are you out of your mind? I say, but think about it. And eventually they'll either say, Mike, okay, let, let's do this. Or they'll convince me that, yeah, we're not ready for that yet. But that's part of the joy of utility safety partners and working here with everybody else, the stakeholders in Alberta, they've given us. And my board has given me a lot of rope to find a way to make things work. Whether it was, Hey, let's bring on Manitoba, but wait, you're Alberta one call. So there's no borders here. I mean, there's no, Manitoba doesn't have a one call center. Why don't we just provide their services and things like that? And the podcast again, Doug, is something that was part of that, Hey, let's try that. Okay. And you kind of played my role. Hey, what do you think? Oh, I don't know. And here we are.

Announcer ([31:09](#)):

And circling back to the podcast again, it's about different people want different ways to bring information in. And in today's extremely busy world, a podcast gives you your 25th hour in the day. You can be doing your other stuff. You can be driving, you can be doing whatever else is going on in your life. And to have a message that just weaves its way into somebody's life, I just think that's more meaningful. And the message you're bringing is safety. At the end of the day, there's nothing more meaningful than safety or health.

Mike Sullivan ([31:44](#)):

Yeah. If we are doing that, if we're reaching one person, and I think you said it best to me one day, he said, Mike, you've had this many downloads. I think it was like several or a hundred thousand I think. No, we're not there yet. But he said, Mike, it's like having a cup of coffee with 3000 people. Each one said, yeah, you know what? I think you're right that I'm able to have that conversation with people and when they reach out to us and Hey, that was a great episode. It really mean something to me that, okay, I guess we met our objective. We reached somebody today. And I'm hoping that we can keep doing that going forward. I hope that 2025 brings us a lot more of what we've been able to do. And even better, we have some things planned outside of the podcast for 2025 that I'm really excited about.

([32:38](#)):

For example, we have, well, our safety conference, we're going to be back onto our second every two year cadence with 2025. 2024 was the year where we weren't supposed to have a conference, but because it was our anniversary, we wanted to do it. So 2025, we're doing our annual safety conference at the Marriott Ice District in April. And looking forward to that, we have some pretty cool things planned given that we're right outside the Rogers Place and there's an Oilers game on the Monday night against the LA Kings. We'll be in the playoff, pre playoff race by then. So it'll be a lot of fun. And also next year we are going to launch the Utility Safety Partners Scholarship. And that's something that for me, it gives somebody in the field of, whether it's engineering, environmental studies or damage prevention, land administration, land agent, you name it.

([33:36](#)):

Any of those functions that supports the damage prevention process, an opportunity to submit or nominate somebody or self nominate for a scholarship. And we will be launching that next year, and the first recipient will receive it before the end of 2025, and they can apply it to their studies that year beginning later that year. So that's something that for me is important. We want to be able to pay it forward and promote utility safety partners, promote the damage prevention process and recognize the future of damage prevention. Thankfully, there's less and less guys with gray hair like me who are doing what we do. There's a young people coming in and I'm really excited to see that, and I want to keep honoring that with the USP scholarship. So there's some really interesting stuff coming. Also next year is the lookup and live application. And we've heard Cookie Glenn Cook speak to us about that. And we are working right now, share, Kirk is leading that project along with predominantly ad co electric. And we are going to launch the lookup and live application next year. And what that allows a person to do, it's a

Announcer ([34:56](#)):

Mobile app.

Mike Sullivan ([34:57](#)):

It's a mobile app, or even your pc, desktop, whatever. What it allows a person to do is to use that mobile application. If they're working in an area and they have overhead assets and they want to know what the clearance is, where the kilovolts are, the limits of approach, who owns it, who the contact information is, they just go onto that app and they can precisely identify all overhead assets in the vicinity of their project. And when we marry that, assuming that we maintain this notification process, we have now for overhead assets, the pilot that we launched a year ago, assuming that that continues, what we believe is that this will dramatically reduce the number of the amount of triage to those overhead asset companies. Because what's happening right now is this pilot, when a person submits a locate request and there are overhead assets in the vicinity, the person who submit the LOCATE request is being told, by the way, these are the buried utilities that are in your dig area, but these are the overhead asset assets in your area as well. These are the limits of approach. Stay seven meters safe or whatever the case may be. And if you need more information, here's the company that you need to contact. So we know that the overhead asset companies are being contacted a lot saying, I need more information.

[\(36:25\)](#):

And that's been, in some cases, been somewhat overwhelming. But this is a service that didn't exist before. And already this year or since November last year, there's almost 57,000 notifications that have gone out to excavators saying You're working the vicinity of overhead power lines. So if we can marry this lookup and live application to that process, it would dramatically reduce the amount of triage or information requests going to those individual overhead asset companies. And they can see all the information right there for themselves.

Announcer [\(36:57\)](#):

We have such a great industry, the attitude towards safety and planning, he's amazing. And the average person just doesn't realize. They don't the work that goes into that.

Mike Sullivan [\(37:07\)](#):

They don't. And it's all about promoting awareness. It's all about being knowledgeable before you do your work. And again, I look at that look up and live, would we have the flexibility? What could we be nimble to a regulated environment to do that? And I don't know,

[\(37:28\)](#):

It's very dependent, I think, on your relationship with the government, on your ability to maintain communication with the government and the person that you're working with in government, they have to trust you. So anyway, we're on an interesting path. Never a dull moment. When I came to Alberta one in 2011, my plan was to stay five years. Here I am 13 years later, 13 and a half years later. And it hasn't stopped being interesting. Do I have 13 years in me more in me? No. No, I don't. But it hasn't stopped being interesting. I am part of a tremendous team of dedicated people inside utility safety partners and outside our stakeholders. And I firmly believe that the individual has limitations, obviously. But a team, there's nothing that can be accomplished. So that as long as we're meeting that, then I'm happy to continue on and make that difference. But I'm looking to the future too. Who's going to step into this role going forward and what's needed?

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

How do you feel in the morning after that first sip of coffee? Do you know it's time to go to your computer and go to work? That's my way of saying, are you still having fun?

Mike Sullivan ([38:46](#)):

Oh, yeah. And there's always things that you don't want to do. It's like, okay, that's part of the job I really don't like, obviously, and you leave it to last because you do want to do all the fun things first. That's the same with any job. That's the same with any job. So there's parts of the job that are perhaps getting tougher or that you just don't look forward to. But that's the same with anything.

Announcer ([39:14](#)):

I know. Any job I've left, it comes down to when I have, I don't drink coffee, I drink tea in the morning. But same idea.

Doug Downs ([39:21](#)):

Sure.

Announcer ([39:21](#)):

It's that sort of moment in the morning where you're about to do the thing you do every day and you take stock of kind of your life and say, is this what I want to do? Here we go again. I've got everything in front of me for the day. Are we good with that? And it does reach a point where you say, you know what? This isn't, this isn't quite what it should be. I need a shift. If you're good after that first sip of coffee in the morning, then you're good.

Mike Sullivan ([39:51](#)):

Well, I'm lucky too because I have a lot of interests outside of work

Announcer ([39:56](#)):

Guitar.

Mike Sullivan ([39:56](#)):

I play music. I have my family obviously, and my grandkids and

Announcer ([40:02](#)):

The rhythmic gymnastics courses you've been taking

Mike Sullivan ([40:06](#)):

Tumbling. Yep, yep. I'm getting really, really good at the flexed arm. Hang and No,

Announcer ([40:13](#)):

I'm proud of you.

Mike Sullivan ([40:13](#)):

Yeah, start. I got my Iron Cross pretty soon. The one Armed Iron Cross. No, I have a lot of interest outside of work that keep me, keep my mind occupied that I think if you're not exercising that other side of your brain, the artistic side or something like that, then you're probably going to get consumed. You're going to hate life. And I don't look forward to doing something else after I'm done for the day,

getting outside, working on the car, working on the yard, or just picking up the guitar or the bass, going down and hitting the drums or something like that.

Announcer ([40:52](#)):

10 minutes in the day.

Mike Sullivan ([40:53](#)):

Oh yeah. I have my guitar, one of my guitar sitting right here. And I am going out to rehearse later tonight with the guys. We got to kick this weekend. And

Announcer ([41:02](#)):

It's fun to put you on the spot. Play us out, pick up the guitar, play us out. I don't think it's in tune, to be honest. It's not in

Mike Sullivan ([41:09](#)):

Tune. I haven't played this one in a little while. Come on, Jimmy playing us a song. That's right. I don't think it's in tune, so No, I won't. But if you're listening to the podcast though, and you hear that music at the beginning of music at the end, that is me on the bass.

Announcer ([41:27](#)):

Wow.

Mike Sullivan ([41:28](#)):

Yeah. That was your

Announcer ([41:30](#)):

Fingers still that fast. That's amazing.

Mike Sullivan ([41:32](#)):

No, they're not. That's funny you say that because when I listen to that and when it's on regular speed, it's like, wow, I used to play that fast and I don't think I could play that fast. That was recorded in 2004. It was a band I was playing with at the time called The Blue Zeros. That's not an original composition. The song is actually, it's called, you Won't Believe this, it's called Funky Christmas by James Brown. And in James Brown's version, there's lyrics, but we didn't put any lyrics. We just liked the Run and we recorded it. Just we're in the studio doing a bunch of recording, Hey, this thing won't fiddle around with this. And we kept it. And the keyboard player, Darius Wilson, who we were playing with at the time, he had this really cool patch over top. And if you listen to it, it's really cool. I think it's great. So if you want me to play you out, then that's playing you out. I'm playing you in every time. All good. Well, we'll give it a listen. Thanks so much for listening again to The Safety Moment podcast. I really appreciate that you listened to us. And once again, thanks to all our listeners, thanks to all our guests this past year, and we'll be talking to you again in February, if not earlier. Oh, Mike, go.