

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

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Mike Sullivan ([00:16](#)):

Welcome to the Safety Moment podcast. I'm your host, Mike Sullivan. Today we're going to be speaking with a gentleman by the name of David Hermanson. He is with Pipestone Projects, but he's also the host of a podcast called Support Pipelines, which is doing some great work in terms of promoting awareness, none of the really the pipeline industry, but the people within the industry. And I was very fortunate to be a guest of his recently and today he is a guest of mine and I hope you enjoy the episode. Away we go. Hey Dave, nice to have you here. Thank you for joining me on the Safety Moment podcast. We're just talking before we hit the record button and I was on your podcast support pipelines. It must be, was it before Christmas?

David Hermanson ([01:03](#)):

God, I feel like it was a while ago now, wasn't it? It has to have been at least a couple months. I can't remember. It was before or after, but it was funny even the first time we met.

Mike Sullivan ([01:13](#)):

Yes, it is.

David Hermanson ([01:14](#)):

It was just such an easy conversation with you. I think I told you at the end of it I was like, oh my god, Mike, I think you're just a natural at this.

Mike Sullivan ([01:22](#)):

Well, either that or I think we just hit it off right away and I actually, I've been looking forward to this. We talked about it way back when you jumping on an episode with me and it, it's like, well, I can't wait to do this because I don't know, it just kind of clicked and what you do and you working pipelines and my history, it just kind, I don't know. It worked. So I've been looking forward to this conversation. And so how have you been doing? But bottom line, doing good.

David Hermanson ([01:51](#)):

I've been doing really well, so as you know, so what I do in pipeline construction, it's across Western Canada. It's definitely been a little bit slower after this massive run of large projects we've had. So even me being up here working right now, I'm so grateful. I know so many people aren't,

([02:11](#)):

But it's just that simple. I'm happy to be working, happy to be still in the mix and getting involved and yeah, no, I spend a lot of time talking to different people on LinkedIn, even personally, people who have my phone and say, Hey, do you have a job? Or do you know what's going on? And I always try to encourage people and say, well, this is what I hear what's coming up, or this is what we've helped bid. And just to try to encourage people and say, Hey, there is a light at this end of this tunnel. Just got to hang in. But yeah, it's tough to hang in for a lot of people when you've been hanging in for six months. Yeah,

Mike Sullivan ([02:45](#)):

Well six months. Six years almost. For a lot of guys. It's been a hard slog. I think I mentioned when we were chatting a couple of months back on your podcast, back in the days when I was working with the National Energy Board, the Canada Energy regulator, today as an inspector, I was constantly being asked when I was in the field, when's the next big project coming? I hear rumors and for a lot of the guys, whether they're welders or whatever they may be doing, they're somewhat nomadic. They go where the work is and they're ready to go. That's the way it goes. But they really, in many cases, they don't know where that's going to be next. So if they hit on a project that's 3, 4, 5, 6 months long, that's gold. That's gold. And not a lot of those around

David Hermanson ([03:32](#)):

Anymore. No, not at all. So one thing that has, I would say changed in the past for sure, the past, say the past 10 years or so, where in the past we had a feel for what was coming up for work. So we'd be talking to our clients, the owners and operators of these pipelines. Nowadays we have even more insight because they reach out to us to try to help with some of the planning and estimating and to try to de-risk some of these projects, tighten up their schedules, just basically look for some help with construction planning and estimating because it benefits everyone if we can kind of work together before they start. However, at the time of tender, you do your best to win the work, but it's resulted, I think as we've come a bit closer with our relationship with some of these clients, with the planning side, it's definitely improved a lot of the efficiencies and a lot of successes we've had with these projects.

Mike Sullivan ([04:33](#)):

I want to get into that a little bit later, but before we do that, for those of my listeners, all 5 million of them, I'm sure. Okay, maybe it's 4 million, but anyway, I might be pushing it, but just maybe tell me a little bit about yourself. And obviously you're in pipeline work, but I'm very curious. I'm sure a lot of people are how you got into podcasting, but first you're following in your dad's footsteps, right? In the pipeline world

David Hermanson ([05:03](#)):

For sure. There's four of us kids and we all ended up doing it. My sister's the eldest and I got an older brother, had a younger brother, and my sister, she stopped doing it and eventually went and had a family and her and her husband have a trucking company and they've since kind of quasi retired, but the three boys, we just kind of kept doing it. And you started out as a laborer, same as everyone else, and you stick it out. There's no real pipeline. A lot of people do, but there's not a trade per se where you apprentice under doing it. There's not a formal, you go to school and there's a structured thing. It's more you just do a job, you decide whether you like it or not, and you either keep doing the same thing, keep being a laborer, you go to a certain crew or you maybe jump on a piece of equipment or you get with testing and it basically filters people into different areas based on interest and skillset. And for me, the three of us boys, we just liked it, Mike, and we kept doing it.

Mike Sullivan ([06:10](#)):

It's funny, and again, like we were talking a number of months ago, the linear rights of way for me it was rail than pipeline. But everybody, and I mean everybody I met in the field predominantly, but also in the pipeline companies, the offices as well, but predominantly in the field, you could tell this is what they want to do and this is what they are doing. And there's such a passion around it. And anybody who doesn't have that passion, and clearly you do, but anybody who doesn't have that passion, they're

weeded out way early in their tenure and they just don't exist in the pipeline world. And the level of a professionalism I find in the pipeline industry in the field as well as the offices, it's very high, maybe higher than anywhere else I've ever encountered. Do you find that as well?

David Hermanson ([07:03](#)):

I would say I've talked to so many people, especially younger people in the past five years who've entered this industry. And I've said it is an unconventional career by many standards. However, it is a career. If you want to keep doing it, stick it out. So a lot of people, I find, especially young people and young families who try to make a go of it, a wonderful, everyone talks Mike about out the money side of it. They pay the guys really well, but the reality is you walk into it and it's a wonderful

([07:37](#)):

Community. It

([07:38](#)):

Is of people. So that's what kind of keeps people there. The challenge is, especially with a lot of the young people we've brought out the past five years or so, five, 10 years, if you're a young family, have your house and your truck and the kids and to be away from home all the time and all of a sudden you finish a job and the next job isn't right on your doorstep. It can be tough for people to navigate some of those things. It's just when you're getting going in life, I assume it was the same for you. How did you get into it?

Mike Sullivan ([08:11](#)):

Well, for me, I joined the regulator. I was never with a pipeline. I was later on, but I joined the National Energy Board in 1992 and here in Calgary, and it had just moved to Calgary from Ottawa. Prior to that I was with the railway in Montreal in Quebec. And I didn't join a pipeline company until 2002, 10 years later and with Alliance Pipeline, and I wasn't anywhere near the field as much as I used to be when I was with the feds. I was an inspection officer, so I was in the field all the time, whether that was construction inspection or operations of any kind. I pretty much did every kind of inspection there was except for environmental and the people I met in the field and the offices too, but predominantly in the field, they were just top notch. They really were. And the willingness to share knowledge and time was just in abundance, just like because they had so much pride in what they did and passion in what they were doing just like yourself, they were just willing to share as much information as possible.

([09:21](#)):

In fact, I had two of my colleagues with the National Energy Board back then, I mean they were engineers and they gained so much knowledge working with people across Canada on different projects that they took all of that knowledge and they went to work for pipeline companies in the US and they've done extremely well doing that. So I think that's what I've never encountered anywhere else except the pipeline industry. This tremendous amount of passion and pride and just a willingness to share information is not power in the pipeline world. It's like no information is meant to be shared.

David Hermanson ([10:00](#)):

I find the exact same thing. I even ask people all the time when I talk to them about not just on the podcast, but when I'm talking to 'em, I say, well, how do you get into pipeline? I'm always interested in that

([10:12](#)):

And who's helped you along your way? And I'm always curious, and everyone always has so many great stories of people who've helped them on their journey professionally and whether they told the people they were kind of mentoring them at the time, it's such a natural thing for a lot of these people. Mike and I can only speak for myself, but that's part of that community and what draws me to it because received so much help and support, not just from my father and Big Dave, but other people along the way. And every time I have the chance to do, especially for young people coming into it,

[\(10:49\)](#):

I love doing it. Not just because I love pipeline, but I want other people to come up in the right way and get as much knowledge. So any chance I can pay it forward, I definitely do. I think I told you, I'm trying to think it when we were talking last time when I was breaking out, my first son, so he was 17, just finished high school, and I talked to my older brother and I said, Hey gun, I am going to bring someone up. The pipeline is there. I want to be with a good foreman and someone who will look out for him and teach him, but make sure someone puts his arm around him. And he said, how about Lou Maloof, a gentleman named Lou? And I'm like, oh my gosh, I can't imagine anyone better.

[\(11:37\)](#):

And

[\(11:37\)](#):

I put him with Lou. And Lou is, he's very black and white, so he cares so much for young people, but there's no bs. If you're working for him, you're a hustler. You're a grinder and he will teach you, right? And Summit, when I talked to him about Lou, he has such a soft spot for him. He sat down with him every week, filled out the Green Hands book, and he takes it so serious because Lou a French gentleman, he takes pipeline. That's his career and he wants it to be right and he wants to. So for me to give my son to a guy that was such a gift. And sure enough, fast forward a few years later, some's still going and doing good and that'll be his job at some point to put his arm around someone.

Mike Sullivan [\(12:19\)](#):

And I bet you this gentleman, Lou had no idea. It's just the way he is, right? He had no idea the impact he has.

David Hermanson [\(12:29\)](#):

I don't know if he does or not. I mean some have thanked him many times. So Gunner even, I reached out to him and said, Lou, I know you know this, but I need to say it for my own benefit. Thank

[\(12:39\)](#):

You.

[\(12:40\)](#):

You're not looking out for another young pipeliner coming up. You're looking out for my son. So not just that he's safe and sound, but he actually learns the right way and hopefully some can make his own mark in this industry because if they don't have a good first experience in pipeline, sometimes that's just enough for people to go like, I'm out. The money's good. But to be away from home, tough on your body, toughen your relationships, work for some guy who is kind of a bully, I'm out. So it was so important that someone had a good experience. And Lou, I can't speak highly enough alone.

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

And you're saying that, and I think back to my days working for the National Energy Board, and for me it was a lot of that was my post-secondary education. I mean, it became what I wanted to do and it became everything I wanted to do. And I can think of four or five people within the pipeline industry and they, they probably have no idea how much they've helped me, but they shaped me in terms of what I knew how I was going to apply it. And I hope that I've been able to do that for other people as well. I don't know if the opportunity came, I mentored as I went along, but there are people out there who nine times out of 10, they are just passionate as can be. And that was everything, and I could do that. So you said something earlier, paying it forward, and that really is it, right? I mean just the whole idea of being able to pay it forward and see the evolution over time of that next person's career. We're only here for a little bit of time, but the industry is here forever hopefully. And we each or each little piece is in that longevity. So to be able to pay it forward, I love it. And I think that's kind of what you're doing with the podcast in a way. You're finding opportunities. I

David Hermanson ([14:38](#)):

Hope so. My interest is in making my own mark on this industry in one way or another. What does that look like, Mike? I honestly have no idea, but I would like to make my own mark. This industry does mean a lot to me. So when people do reach out, especially younger people looking for work or what's coming up, all this kind of stuff, I do make time for them if I can because I remember that feeling about how grateful I was when people made time for me when I was learning or looking for work or whatever. And I carry that with me all the time. My favorite expression, I actually picked up from Big Dave, and it came from, I think it was in, I want to say 2006 or so. I think he decided to try out retirement. What does that look like? So he kind of packed it in for about six months and after about six months, he ended up going back to work. He said multiple friends phoned him for help with bidding and estimating these jobs. And he said after a few conversations where he was like, well, no, I'm going to try to retire. And after about six months, he's like, what am I doing?

([15:51](#)):

These

([15:51](#)):

People are phoning me for help. They help me when I need help and now I'm not helping. We said, that's crazy. So he said, I want to go back to work because I like mentally, I like the community, I want to laugh, I like mentoring all these things. And I wish I could remember the way he said it, Mike, but it was something like I would love to give back to an industry that's given so much to me, and I've carried that exact sentiment with me everywhere I go, every opportunity I can,

Mike Sullivan ([16:20](#)):

I get that. I mean, I am getting close to thinking about retirement, I'm thinking about it and I'm not ready to retire. But I do think about it and I see some of my friends who have retired, they're much older than I am, not really, but I do think about it and I know the people I report to, they have it on their mind. Well, what's Mike going to do? Right? But it scares me because what am I going to do? Because it becomes part of your social network. It does. My family means everything to me, obviously, but what am I going to do to fill that part of my day? So there is that hesitation. So I totally understand where your dad's coming from and to be part of that community, which the pipeline industry is a big community and especially when politically and even socially pipelines have taken a big hit and then that community bonds even stronger.

([17:23](#)):

And a lot of that anxiety being felt by the pipeline industry is coming from parts of Canada or North America or just society that don't understand pipelines at all. They don't appreciate it. So should we care? Well, yes, we should because they're damaging our integrity without even realizing it, without understanding it. But it makes that community so much more important. And I think what you're doing with your podcast is you're raising awareness about that community, but in a very subtle way. And I don't know if you realize what you're doing it, but you are doing it and it's very subtle, but very positive way, and I really applaud you for doing that.

David Hermanson ([18:12](#)):

No, thank you. I do appreciate that. I know we'd like to think this political football that is pipeline is a pretty recent thing, but the reality isn't. I remember reading from some papers back in the eighties that a friend of mine wrote, and it was the exact same thing down in the us. He's an American guy,

([18:34](#)):

And it was very politicized way back then. And it's the same or only worse nowadays with social media where all of a sudden were the bad guys. And I don't know where that came from, but I found earlier in my career, I was a little bit more vocal about advocating for pipelines and trying to speak facts and logic or present the world as I saw it because I am in the weeds, I'm doing it. So I felt like I had an opinion that mattered. And now fast forward, and maybe this is just me getting older, you start some of these conversations, Mike, and you realize, oh, okay, well I don't want to fight man. If you're on the, for whatever reasons, my suspicion is I'm not going to change your mind, and that's okay. I still love you. I still want to be friends with you. I don't want you to unfriend me on Facebook or whatever people say,

Mike Sullivan ([19:24](#)):

You're allowed to have a different opinion, right? Yeah.

David Hermanson ([19:26](#)):

And that's cool. So I try to, that's the more approach. I just don't think I could change people's mind. I do love having these conversations because I do love the industry. I do feel we are held to a very high standard that we're achieving in Canada. And

([19:41](#)):

The one time I do speak up for our industry, I was like, you know what? If you want to stop these pipeline projects here in Canada, unfortunately with how mobile capital is across the whole globe, these projects do get chased to different companies, different jurisdictions, different countries, and a lot of these jurisdictions, countries in particular, I don't want to pick on anyone in particular, but definitely over in some of the Northern African areas, these do not have the same standards, same standards, whether it's technically, environmentally, certainly they don't share the same social values we do. And that actually does matter to me. So it does. I do speak to people when you want to shut us down in Canada, we are doing it the right way. When I say the world needs more Canadian energy, that's not a catchphrase for me. That's something I take to heart, but it's not just me, Mike. If I go out on the right of way right now, I see a whole sea of people who feel the exact same way.

Mike Sullivan ([20:42](#)):

Yep, I agree with you a hundred percent. And I don't know if people realize this, that Canada, the standards for pipeline construction, operation maintenance, far exceed the globe. I mean, we are global leaders in that. I remember when I worked with the feds and also with Alliance Pipeline, there were

delegations that would come to Canada from other countries to learn about our regulatory system, to learn about how we designed and built and operated pipelines. And they want to apply that to their own country, but it doesn't exist there. The standards are so high here, and yet people want us to go higher. Okay? There's always room to improve, but it's a different animal today. Thinking about that, I mean, you've been doing this for a long time. I'm going to ask you, it's not a political question, more of a regulatory question. It might sound political, but when Bill C 69 came in, which was the no more pipelines Bill, bill, how did that affect the industry? I mean, you saw it right on the right of way, you saw what happened just in your opinion, and you don't have to answer that if you feel a little awkward about it, but it had to affect the industry.

David Hermanson ([22:03](#)):

For sure. It does. So I would say, because I don't sit on the owner operator side, I'm not as intimately familiar with the details. There was two, there was Bill C 69, which again, that was, we called the no pipeline one, but there was another one that came up more recent.

Mike Sullivan ([22:19](#)):

Was it C 78?

David Hermanson ([22:21](#)):

It had an eight, was 78 or 58 or something

Mike Sullivan ([22:24](#)):

Like that. Yeah,

David Hermanson ([22:25](#)):

I'd have to look it up. And that one had a more immediate impact on us. Again, where health is such a high standard now, but when we can't, we have certain operators who try and develop projects and something, they're privately funded projects, so we're not relying on government funding and we're not able to just explain them, describe them, whether it's on marketing or the websites or even social media because they're not held to some imaginary standard. So people literally, again, I say this in the most positive way, but even a great amazing project like the Pathways Alliance, what an incredible project. And I remember a couple months ago I was trying to tell somebody, this is a great project you guys. It's coming up in Alberta. It's carbon capture, it's incredible. It's private funded, amazing. And then you go on their website and it had no details, but an explanation about that bill. I want to say it's C 58 or something like that.

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

Yeah, C 78 rings a bell.

David Hermanson ([23:29](#)):

It could be that. And I just so you can edit that

Mike Sullivan ([23:34](#)):

Somewhere. I'll have to put in the notes or something like that. The show notes,

David Hermanson ([23:37](#)):

I didn't know what to say, Mike. All I could say is I do believe we're held a very high standard, and I believe we're achieving that standard. I am all for high standards, whether it's environmentally, technically, socially, again, all these things, I want to engage all the local communities we work in. I want to be held to a high standard. I know we can achieve it, but at some point, where do you draw the line? Again, when we've sat down with one of the owner operators in Calgary here, and they did ask anecdotally, why are these projects, it's like year over year, getting more expensive, and you try to explain to them just like go back 20 years, 25 years, there wasn't the same level of reporting and oversight. I remember as a young guy, we shared our environmental person with the client. And so now there's basically almost like dual roles on both teams and the level of reporting that's even placed on the contractor, significant, the level of reporting for say greenhouse gases as an example, that goes to one of the regulators. Again, all these things every year that goes along, it's just more and more and more, again, I'm not opposed to it, but there is an impact on the bottom line of these projects. And depending on what project you're talking about, it always trickles down to the end user.

Mike Sullivan ([25:01](#)):

Yeah, no, I agree with you and my exposure since Alliance Pipeline has been somewhat removed, but I am aware of some projects where even landowner associations have their own inspector to make sure the pipeline company is doing what it said it was going to do, and then the pipeline company ends up hiring somebody else to ensure the landowners are looking at the same thing that we're supposed to be. So there's singular double and even triple oversight in some cases. And I get it, okay. Everybody wants to have a hard look at things. And a lot of that is driven by again, society and where we are today. And let's face it, some of the sins of the past, not everybody's lily white, but every layer adds another cost. And back, I can think of, I was talking to a former colleague this morning about a project I was working on back in 1998 in Quebec, and it was a 240 kilometer pipeline from Montreal to the eastern townships in order to Vermont. And back then the rule of thumb was roughly about a million dollars a kilometer. That is so far out the window now

([26:23](#)):

For sure.

([26:24](#)):

What are we looking at today? It's got to be, I mean, I can't even imagine what we're talking about today when I look at the cost of major projects.

David Hermanson ([26:31](#)):

Yeah, I remember. So I just finished a major project, a big LNG project for about five years, and I remember I was working for the owner operator at the time, and so we are competing against other owner operators to win this project.

([26:47](#)):

So it's big long cross country pipeline, large diameter inch. And I remember we had a bunch of these micro bores, like micro tunnels, I'd never been around them before, but I had a friend working over in Europe at the time, they were doing some of them. So I phoned them. So this would be just a hair over 10 years ago. Yeah, it'd be about 10 years ago. And I phoned him and he said, oh, well for these micro tunnels, just use about 10,000 bucks a meter or whatever. And I remember this is just to get it in for that. And I was like, that number blew me away. I almost couldn't even write it down with a straight face. It was so insane. 10,000 meter insane. So fast forward 10 years, yeah, that number isn't even

remotely ridiculous anymore. It's so normal. And I don't even know if you could do it for that in some areas anymore. Just the world is evolving and changing and it's getting more costly for sure.

Mike Sullivan ([27:49](#)):

Coming up next month, we have Utility Safety Partners safety conference, and if you haven't registered already, you certainly can please go to our website utility.safety.ca right now. We are expecting about 200 people at the conference. There'll be exhibitors, there'll be plenty of discussions to be held and always a great opportunity to connect with people in the industry before the digging season really gets underway. And boy, have we got a surprise for you. And I can't tell you about it yet, but it is really cool. You will have a chance to win a one of a kind blank, I can't tell you what it is, but one of a kind blank. Keep watching us on social media to find out what that is and how you can win it.

([28:42](#)):

Well, I mean just the permitting, and I hate saying it, but everybody seems to have their hand out. I don't want to get too political on my podcast, but right now we see we're on the advent of another political major election here in Canada, national election, federal election. And the posturing vis-a-vis pipelines is just, yeah, it is something else and everybody has their positions on it, but it is a shame because we need to support each other. Canada is one country and we all have a role to play, and I don't think anybody has any qualms about being wherever they are in that role, they're happy to do it, providing we're all pulling in the same direction, but you can't be part of the team part of the time. And that's unfortunately what we're seeing in my home province where I grew up. And it's unfortunate because the people seem to want it, but the political leaders and maybe they're waiting for something. But yeah, it's really difficult and a shame that we are where we are and I do hope things change for the industry and because bottom line, it's good for Canada,

David Hermanson ([30:06](#)):

It's good for Canada, it's the safest way to move a lot of these broad,

Mike Sullivan ([30:10](#)):

Oh my God, no, nothing better.

David Hermanson ([30:12](#)):

So you talked to, I mean, a terrible, terrible example was and lack GaN God when they did have that train that breaks my heart. I share no good feelings when I talk about that, comparing it to pipelines, it was such a horrible thing where I think 1 47, 40, 42

Mike Sullivan ([30:36](#)):

Or 47

David Hermanson ([30:37](#)):

Lost their lives. There is no silver lining when we talk about these things, but when advocate for pipelines, I do believe we can do it better. We just need the opportunity. That's all. But again, a lot of these, like you said, politics and it's a lot of it's white noise. I try to not get even too involved with that. Not because I can't influence, but I just try to advocate for my industry to the best of my ability. Even with a lot of the stuff unfortunately going down in the US it's political noise and I don't know what's real

and what isn't. But I can tell you, Mike, I have pipeline friends down there. I have a lot of American family on both my mother's side and my father's side

(31:21):

I do.

(31:21):

So you can't pit me against any of these people. I have nothing but good feelings.

Mike Sullivan (31:27):

Same here.

David Hermanson (31:28):

So that's all white noise to me. I just try to do what I think is best for the industry. I still feel like I have a lot of years left into it, and any type of time I could encourage people or I don't want to necessarily change people's mind, but I want to say we're held to a high standard. I believe we're achieving it, and we just want the opportunity to build these privately funded projects funded without being inhibited by our own people. That's my only hope.

Mike Sullivan (31:55):

I agree with you and I applaud you for standing up for the industry like that. People are afraid to, people are afraid to stand up for the industry they're afraid of. Well, getting attacked almost social media wise, right?

David Hermanson (32:10):

For sure. And

Mike Sullivan (32:12):

You do you, oh yeah, you become a lightning rod.

David Hermanson (32:15):

Yeah, you're probably my best example of someone. So if you went to your home province and started talking about pipelines and this and that, it's good and bad, you would probably get some funny looks and it would hurt my feelings. I'd be brokenhearted if some of your friends thought less of you because of that. And that's what I'm trying to avoid.

Mike Sullivan (32:37):

Yeah, I find the people anywhere in Canada are largely supportive of the industry and moving product in Canada for Canadians. When you get the politicians involved, the definition of politics is poly, as many and ticks are blood suckers. And I swear to God, that's the real definition because it just sucks all the air out of the room and it pits people against each other. And this is what we're seeing Canada us right now. And like you said, I have tons of friends in the us I have family that are US citizens whom I love very dearly, and I know they feel the same way about us. They don't feel this way about us and we don't feel that way about them, but the politicians are doing this and it's a damn shame. But that's the reality we live in right now. We got to get through it and hopefully at some point cooler minds will prevail and we'll be back in a situation where everything's hunky dory again.

[\(33:44\)](#):

But right now it's challenging, but this industry that you're involved in and have been forever is, it's kind of gone quiet in a sense. And I am seeing this despite the political rhetoric and all that, I am sensing a resurgence of recognition perhaps is the best way to say it. I don't think the industry's integrity can be hit any harder than it has been. And the industry just maintained that, Hey, we do a good job. We don't have to create a story because that is the story. We do a really good job and we're globally recognized for it. That's a good place to be. That gives me pride.

David Hermanson ([34:32](#)):

No, I strongly agree. I know with what I found was, so since I started pipelining, there always seems to be one project that, so if you don't like pipelines, whether it's in the media or you just don't like pipe, there's always one project. And once that one gets built, then they move on to hitting the next one. I remember it was Keystone for a brief period, and that's all you read about in the paper every day. Then it was Energy East and oh yeah, that's all you read about. And then it was Northern Gateway Project, that's all it was Transmountain, and now it's one of these ones,

Mike Sullivan ([35:06](#)):

Well, I mean the amount of public outcry on Trans Mountain, on Burnaby Mountain until it seems they were getting ready to build, which there was no longer private funds, it was public funds just evaporated. It went away. And I'm not sure where they all went, but it went away. But who knows who's pulling those strings. Even the protest side seems far too organized. And it's not ad hoc, it's an organized thing. And I guess if you follow the money, and at the time I was quite interested in it and I did and came to my own conclusions, but it's far too organized just to be ad hoc

David Hermanson ([35:52](#)):

For sure. Yeah, and it's funny you say that because I've told multiple people, I'm the last conspiracy theorist you'll ever find. I can't be bothered. I'm too busy doing other stuff. But sometimes I do find myself my mind wandering. It's like, well, how can this be so organized against one specific project and why is it always keep appearing in the paper and then they'll move on to the next project? I dunno what the end result is. I can share even with pipeline in certain areas, which are definitely not friendly. So Alberta, as you can imagine, pretty friendly to be pipeline through those areas. Northeast PC for sure. But other areas we've been in where it hasn't been that friendly and we will have some communities are wholly supportive and I can't speak, and they'll go out of their way to help us and support us and talk to us. Unfortunately in private sometimes they thank you so much, appreciate everything for the community and support these small businesses because they don't want to speak a little bit more openly, which again, for right or for wrong, I understand. And we're not trying to upset any communities, but there is a lot of positive that's just under the surface that doesn't necessarily make the mainstream media in the papers.

Mike Sullivan ([37:09](#)):

It's interesting you say that. I mean, I was talking with somebody else this morning about the work I do with Utility safety partners, the notification process, locate requests, all that, and the industry that I am in, and we've been shifting from calls to clicks for a number of years now, and Alberta has been leading that charge from a call to action click before you dig for 10 years now. And not everybody has done that. In Canada, though, we're approaching 90%, 85 to 90% of all locate requests now in Canada are on the web. And the us not so much, it's getting higher, probably around 65, 70, but they have this massive 8 1

1 campaign, which is a sensational public awareness campaign. It really is very strong. The brand is strong. It's almost like the sea of the Montreal Canadians that has that kind of impact the brand.

[\(38:13\)](#):

And we discovered here in Alberta a couple of years ago that locate requests that originate on the web are less likely to result in damage. So that's interesting. Why is that? Well, because the person who's submitting the locate request, they go on a map and they see where they're digging. Exactly. And you can appreciate this. I see where I am. I'm digging right here. That's where I need to locate. Whereas if you're talking on a phone to an agent, I'm on the northeast corner of east and Maine, and maybe it's the southwest corner actually, but you mixed it up and you also locate gets done the wrong way, the wrong place, whatever it might be, and you have a damage. So this is where we've been saying, click before you dig is the best practice. This really needs to be the norm. And we put our analysis out there, we ask people to debunk it, to test it.

[\(39:11\)](#):

And in Canada, we had Ontario said, you know what, not only is your analysis correct, it's even more compelling when we look at our own data here in Ontario, but by and large in the us, nobody wants to talk about it because they have such a strong brand. It almost becomes style over substance, right? They're afraid to change the brand or whatever it might be, and to what you were just speaking about that change, that it's there, but you're unwilling to move from it because it's, are you complacent or comfortable or is something holding it back? But bottom line, change is hard. Change is

David Hermanson [\(39:55\)](#):

Hard for sure,

Mike Sullivan [\(39:55\)](#):

Right? Yeah. So I just find it interesting that in different walks of life we're all facing the same things. So I want to talk before we cut off here, but I wanted to talk a little bit about support pipelines. How long have you been holding your podcast?

David Hermanson [\(40:17\)](#):

I started doing small videos of my iPhone, I'm going to say six, seven years ago for sure. And then you get busy with work, and I put them on YouTube. And my idea at the time was just spread some positivity. Even at the time, I talked to some friends and everyone's like, oh, screw Trudeau, and stuff like that, because again, I get it for sure. He just killed, I don't even know how long before he got into office, he killed a pipeline I'd been working on for about three years, two and a half years in the field. It was going to be a major thousand plus kilometer liquids line. So we were all invested. So I get it. But what I found was that's not constructive. Just say, oh, screw that guy. Well, there's more to it than that. I don't know the nature of all of it, but all I can do is try to be more vocal and more an advocate for the industry.

[\(41:15\)](#):

So rather than just always being reactive to any negative criticism I got personally or as an industry, as a pipeline, I thought, well, I'm going to try to be more proactive, put more positivity out there, vocalize it. So that's how I started doing these videos six or seven years ago. And it wasn't really until last winter, so just about over a year ago, it was going to be my first winter at home in about five years coming off a job, and it was actually sleep. Marie said, oh, I know you like doing those videos, talking to your friends.

She was, I'll get you some better stuff. And she went on to Amazon and got me that little setup that you saw when you were there. I thought, oh, this is pretty

Mike Sullivan ([41:58](#)):

Cool. Oh, it was a great setup. Yeah, it was a great setup. Yeah.

David Hermanson ([42:01](#)):

So I just basically started talking to my friends and I told my friend, Nick, well, hey Nick, I going to do this. Do you want to come sit with me? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sounds good. So we sat down, no agenda, no, just talk in and BS and just informal and just to see where the conversation led. And I appreciate even you who I didn't even know at the time reached out, and I think I said, let's sit down and talk. And we just had a great conversation, build a bit of a friendship, realize, oh, we actually know a lot of the same community and people and all these kinds of stuff from that conversation. And I've had more than a few people ask me, well, what's the object? Why? And I say, I don't know why I'm doing this podcast. I like people. I like talking to people.

([42:44](#)):

And hopefully it goes somewhere good and it's evolved into some other good topics. Mental health is a huge one. It's a huge challenge just under the surface in our industry, even having, unfortunately so many people taken out their lives in our industry on these jobs as we've been working, and that's a whole separate subject, but I like to talk about those things too and make them more hopefully normal and comfortable. And so hopefully one day, if heaven forbid, a guy gets backed into a corner, maybe he'll think of me and he'll reach out to me and say, Hey, Davy, I'm not doing great, or whatever. So what's the objective? Even? I'm not too sure, but fast forward. So I've been only doing them just over a year, and I got about, I dunno, I want to say 80 or 90 episodes all done. That's great. So that's 80 or 90 conversations maybe I wouldn't have had otherwise. People I might not have met because half those people I'd never met before.

Mike Sullivan ([43:44](#)):

It just kind of happened.

David Hermanson ([43:45](#)):

It just kind of happened organically. And so I'm very grateful. So where it leads, I don't know, but I plan on keeping and doing them. And actually last summer, we were up in Northeastern BC and I kind of brought a small version of that into my wealth site, and I did a few with some guys on the jog, and I just like doing it. So when I was talking to you and you said, you do it too, I'm like, oh, pat, that's so cool. Yeah, let's talk.

Mike Sullivan ([44:12](#)):

Let's do it. Well, it's funny. I mean, our producer, who is probably listening right now, Doug, with stories and strategies, he and I worked together for a little while, and during Covid, he just said, Mike, you should do a podcast. And I said, why? Well, you've been around a while and a lot of stuff, you have point or a point to share. And I was like, okay. It was a Covid project, something a bit of a time filler almost. But here we are five years later, and I think we're 60 plus episodes in, because we only record April to October or something like that, the height of the digging season. And I'm like, well, I don't think we can stop. This is not something you stop. It's another medium. And in our business promoting awareness of

q click, before you dig and everything goes along with it, you have to be firing on all cylinders from a promotions campaign.

(45:10):

So whether it's social media or digital media or now podcasts, the things that are disappearing are newsprint and that kind of thing. But the old billboards, we used to see everywhere that's, it's had its day, but now we have to be in this space and these conversations, you kind of hit it on the head. What my producer has said to me, he says, Mike, okay, you've got 60 episodes, but you've got X number of downloads in the thousands. That is, imagine a cup of coffee with four or 5,000 people. I said, yeah, good point, good point. And they're listening. They're tuning in, and not just here in Alberta, it's across Canada, across the us, around the world, have people that download from different parts of Australia and other places in England. So, well, I guess it's making an impact and we should keep doing it. So I applaud you for doing it, doing it for all the right reasons, absolutely all the right reasons.

David Hermanson (46:16):

No, no, and I appreciate that. Thank you. And I would say same thing to you. I would encourage you to keep doing it. Funny, you and I are in a time when I never in a million years would've dreamed about doing a podcast, but I've seen whether there's a bit of a cultural shift where people are no longer receiving information on the mainstream media for any number of reasons. I got into podcasts, Mike, just from a friend turned me onto audio books, and so I really like audio books. So whether I was driving or going for a walk or doing some mindless work, sometimes throwing an audiobook, and I really enjoyed that, just not just music. Now I'm getting information. Well, once I realized this, go, yeah, these audio books, they're not that much cheaper than real books. So I was kind of burning through those and thought, well, let me get a wig onto these podcasts, essentially free for all intents and

(47:13):

Purposes. Yeah, they are.

(47:14):

And again, that's how I got, so I liked them. So who was going to list this episode? I don't know. You, me and our family maybe.

Mike Sullivan (47:21):

Yeah, a dog might. Yeah,

David Hermanson (47:23):

Exactly. But I still like the idea doing it just in case someone else finds it interesting. And again, maybe someone reaches out to you and Mike and says, Hey, Mike, I you thinking about retiring? Don't do it. And I'm going to tell you why. You never know where to lead.

Mike Sullivan (47:38):

Yeah, no, you don't. And if anybody on my board's listening, I'm not planning to retire just yet, but it's on my mind. It's on my mind. It, the more gray I get, the more I just came back from a two week vacation. I was like, wow, I could do this full time and I couldn't afford it. But you think about it, you say, man, why wasn't I born here where I just wake vacation? I would've just retired maybe 20 years ago. But now I do think about it, and it's coming, but it's not imminent, that's for sure. But yeah, we'll keep going with a podcast. And Dave, I'd love to have you back on as a guest. Anytime. Anytime

David Hermanson ([48:16](#)):

At all. Well, I appreciate that. Well, when I'm done this job, I don't know what my schedule is, but I would love to do one in person.

[\(48:24\)](#):

We'll have you back in the support pipelines. One, it will sit down, have a coffee, and again, see where that conversation leads. I've actively tried to, I don't need to encourage Big Dave to stop retirement. He's really not interested at all. But he said, again, these are great conversations that you'd probably appreciate. And he's like, people always think about retirement. It's almost like a financial decision. So at some point, you get to the position you can, but where will you spend your time? How will you spend your time with people? How will you contribute? How will you find your purpose and all these things And value, right, exactly. It's good things to contemplate before you actually do pull the trigger. But yeah, no, anytime. Mike will be back here before you know it. And yeah, it'll be great to do it. We sit down by a

Mike Sullivan ([49:16](#)):

Coffee. That'd be great to do. Well, Dave, thanks for doing this and keep pipelining and keep podcasting. Awesome. I appreciate brother, that's going to wrap things up on the Safety Moment podcast. I'd like to thank our producers stories and strategies, and I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any directory you're listing on. And please do leave a rating. We appreciate it. You can follow us on X. Remember what Twitter used to be. Now it's X at Utility safety. We're also on Instagram and Facebook. If you'd like to send us a note, maybe you have an episode idea, you can email us at info@utilitysafety.ca and please put podcast and big bold letters in the subject header. And here's something new. Maybe you'd like to sponsor the Safety moment. If you do, send us an email about that too. I'm Mike Sullivan, the president of Utility Safety Partners. Click to know what's above and below. One click costs you nothing and not clicking. Well, that could cost you everything.