

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

You're 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 ([00:14](#)):

Hi everybody. Welcome to the Safety Moment Podcast. I'm Mike Sullivan, your host. My guest today is somebody that has been in the industry, the damage prevention industry for, believe it or not, over 50 years, and he's still an active gentleman in this space. None other than Bill Kiger, president of Pennsylvania 811. I've been trying to land Bill for quite some time to join me on the podcast. And finally, the stars aligned and we did so today. So let's get right into it. Bill, been trying to do this for a while. Thanks for joining me on the Safety Moment Podcast. You're a tough guy to nail down. Again, your rolling stone gathers no moss, I guess, right?

Bill Kiger ([01:02](#)):

We'll, I have a real tough time telling anybody no. So that really makes it difficult to get this in place. And again, at my age, you shouldn't be running around as much as I do probably, but it keeps me young.

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

Well, I don't know about that. You're a testament to everybody who in this business, and we all look up to you, it's amazing what you've been able to accomplish beyond just the sheer number of years you've been in the business. And we'll get to that for sure. I mean, it goes without saying, I think everybody who knows you knows that you're a pioneer in this space. And tip of the hat, obviously to you, you've seen a lot of us come and go.

Bill Kiger ([01:49](#)):

Thank you.

Mike Sullivan ([01:50](#)):

And you're still here. And you're not just a figurehead, you're damn effective. So that's a testament to you. But before we get into all that, how many years is it now? 51 or 50 you've been working in this business?

Bill Kiger ([02:05](#)):

52 in December.

Mike Sullivan ([02:07](#)):

52 years. And now the story goes, and I don't know if I'm getting this right, but the story goes that you were asked to go to a Call Cathy meeting to take some notes. Now, what was Call Cathy back 50 plus years ago?

Bill Kiger ([02:26](#)):

Call Cathy was the original organization in Pennsylvania, which just covered Allegheny County, which is the county surrounding Pittsburgh. And it started in '72. It started taking notifications back in 1972 and it

was in an answering service. And there were six members and my third level bell supervisor said, "Can you go to this meeting?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said,

Mike Sullivan ([02:58](#)):

"Just take notes." You couldn't say anything back then either, right?

Bill Kiger ([03:02](#)):

Well, to your third level boss, come on. What you going to do, right? Yeah, that's right.

([03:05](#)):

Right. Well, I had 65 drafts persons working for me at that point in time. So again, that was my real job. And I also had a million dollar mapping aerial photography and scribing the information onto the aerial photographs that we wanted to add. So I had a plate full at that point in time, but the reality of it is I really was shocked when the first thing they did at the meeting was pass up this sheet of paper. And it was essentially a compilation of four pages, which was the new law, which had just been passed. And no one in that group knew anything about it. It got passed with no one knowing about it.

Mike Sullivan ([03:56](#)):

And

Bill Kiger ([03:56](#)):

So round and round we went and got through that and got things going. And of course they said, "Well, what can you do about this? Because with the current system where we essentially hand write tickets, it's not going to go anywhere. We can't expand too much beyond where we are because number one, we're sending all the tickets to all the members. There was no segregation whatsoever of the tickets." So I said, "Well, just keeping up with the volume will be one thing." So when the law passed, we went from 250 a month to 888 in a partial month of April 1975. And then they really got torqued up because how are we going to handle this volume and how are we going to grow? So I made some suggestions. Now this is again, my boss told me I was done when I went back and don't worry about it.

([04:59](#)):

I'll take care of it till the next month's meeting happened. And then he came at 6:30 at night, knocked on my partition in my cubicle and said, "Are you in there?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Can you go to that meeting tomorrow?" I said, "Well, do you have any suggestions in response to the questions that they ask about what kind of equipment we need and all that?" He said, "No." He said, "Well, don't you?" I said, "Yeah." So he said, "Give it to him." I said, "Fine." Went to the meeting, gave him that, came back, reported, same deal. Don't get involved. You're done. Next month, same deal. Comes at me after working hours and said, "You're in this. I can't tell you you're in it for good, nor can I tell you you're not." Well, here I am 52 years later.

Mike Sullivan ([06:02](#)):

So you resigned from Bell at some point.

Bill Kiger ([06:05](#)):

That was in 74, five, and I resigned in April of 78.

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

Wow. So you were doing this sort of a dual role for a little while and then took over. And before we started recording here, I had mentioned my father and I showed you this plaque. So my father was a Bell employee. He was an engineer in the safety department at

Bill Kiger ([06:32](#)):

Bell. I was a member of that organization as well. Yeah,

Mike Sullivan ([06:34](#)):

The Telephone Pioneers of America, and he was given this plaque in 19 -

Bill Kiger ([06:38](#)):

That was when America really meant North America. I

Mike Sullivan ([06:41](#)):

Guess, right? Because this was in 1969 in New York, he was given this plaque. And later on, well, roughly the same time, he was president of the Association of Telephone Management Employees Engineering. And I mentioned this story to you and I mentioned it on LinkedIn at one point. I had no idea what he did. He passed away when I was very young, but I found out years later and not that long ago actually, that he was involved in creating the first Call Before You Dig program internal to Bell. And here we are decades later and here I am doing this and I had no idea what he did. But the connection between Canada, the US then, it was very strong. I do remember my dad being in the US a lot. He was often in New York, I know that, and Philadelphia, I believe.

Bill Kiger ([07:36](#)):

Oh, that was their headquarters. So obviously that would be the place he would normally go. Yeah.

Mike Sullivan ([07:41](#)):

And then you mentioned a gentleman by the name of Jean Forte that you worked with, and I have no way of knowing, but I wouldn't be surprised if he knew my father. Now, my dad would be a hundred years old today. He was born in 1926.

Bill Kiger ([07:59](#)):

My dad was born the same year.

Mike Sullivan ([08:01](#)):

Was he?

Bill Kiger ([08:02](#)):

And he was August 21st, so he would've been a hundred this past 21st of August.

Mike Sullivan ([08:09](#)):

Yeah. And so I mean, this goes way back historically that what I'm getting at I guess is yes, okay, there's an interesting history for me personally and for you, but there's been a connection between Canada and

the US on the damage prevention front, on the infrastructure front, the buried utilities safety element for decades. And it continues to this day. The interminglings, intertwining of our organizations really interests me and perhaps more now than ever before. And I want to get to that later, but going back to you and your legacy, 50 years in this industry, you've seen a lot. You've seen a lot of advancements, you've seen a lot of change. And a testament to anybody's longevity is the ability to roll with the changes and in some cases, many cases to lead them. And you've been at the forefront of a lot of those changes.

(09:07):

Tell me a little bit about some of the high watermarks of your career. And I'm thinking obviously OCSI is a big one, but there's still these things are coming along. So what are some of those high watermarks for you?

Bill Kiger (09:18):

We were almost to the point where we started looking around to see what was actually out there in those days. And unfortunately, there was only five or six other centers in operation at that point in time. The very initial center was in 1912 in Chicago, but they only took damages and permits. So it really wasn't a true One Call system. The first One Call was in Rochester, New York. So again, very close to the Canadian border. So I'm sure that El Canada was very much watching what was going on as well as everybody was around at that point in time. The guy from AT&T who was my co-chair at Call Cathy and I went up to Michigan and heard that they were computerized.

(10:14):

And we took the trip, got up there and Mike Digon, who was the executive director there at the time, didn't even show up for him. He knew we were coming, but he wasn't there when we got there. And so his, I don't know, second or third in command showed us around and there were 30 people handwriting eight and a half by 11 forms and then putting them in their inbin or out bin on the cubicle wall. And the emergencies would go on top and everything else would go in the bottom. And then somebody would go around and collect those tickets and walk over to what looked like a car parts catalog. So four feet wide and they'd go to the county, the township, the range section, quarter section, and they'd write a four digit code across the face of it in red magic marker. And I said to the young lady who came to show us how she did that, I said, "Well, is this accurate?"

(11:27):

What's your rate of failure?" She said, "Oh, about 45%." And

Mike Sullivan (11:34):

That was acceptable.

Bill Kiger (11:37):

I looked at my colleague that was there with me. I said, "Ray, let's get the hell out of here." Because all he did was essentially type that code into their mini computer and it would transmit that to the involved utilities. So that was their system. Now they did record at that point in time, which it took us until 1980 to start recording because nobody felt that was that big of a deal. But when we did that, we also had to get the exemption from the law that required us to beep every 15 or so seconds, which was another pain. Yeah, I can

Mike Sullivan (12:19):

Imagine.

Bill Kiger ([12:22](#)):

Yeah. So we did get that and we've been using that exemption ever since. Again, getting that awakening, if you will, that the state of the art at that point in time didn't exist. That's

Mike Sullivan ([12:37](#)):

Right. Yeah.

Bill Kiger ([12:40](#)):

So I worked in downtown Pittsburgh and across the street was IBM, down the street was GE, Remington, Arrows, all the big computer company names of the day. And I called on them and said, "Hey, this is what I'd like to do." The sales guy from IBM who was again across the street from our offices said, "You want to do what?" I said, "I want to take the information and type it directly into the CRT." And he said to me, "What's a CRT?" I was shocked. So I went away from all of those interviews about to cry, honest to God, because they had no idea of what I wanted to do because there was no such thing as a call center. Yeah,

Mike Sullivan ([13:36](#)):

The need expanded the capacity, right?

Bill Kiger ([13:38](#)):

Right. So I got somebody in sales at AT&T and he said, "Why don't you talk to this company in the North Hills called Online Systems?" So I called them up, set up an interview. Salesman came in, sat with me the entire day, wrote all these notes, came back a week later, shows me an overhead projection of what he was proposing and what I had told him I wanted to see done. He said, "We can make it happen in 30 days." Wow. What? I said I couldn't even get them to know what I was talking about at the others. He said, "I'll have a demo for you in 30 days, and if you want to do that to your group, you just set up the meeting and we'll be there, but we'll need dial up and some terminals because that's what we had then." So I signed up the data demo room and we had our little meeting.

([14:49](#)):

They started and gave the little presentation that he showed me with the overhead projector. And then he actually created a ticket and sent a ticket and it came back on another receiving. It was a dial-up terminal, but it showed exactly what they could do and it happened pretty much instantly and it was all on dial-up.

Mike Sullivan ([15:14](#)):

And you look at what is being done today with online locate requests being all of that information typed in right at the source. So the person excavating or the company excavating, they're putting ad information in online themselves. And what a change it's been. I mean, a lot of this and a lot of what you described was the case for quite some time. The software just wasn't there, but here we are, the software has changed dramatically. The overall intent, obviously it hasn't, this is what has been done, but the proliferation of awareness to the public really pushed forward with 811 and the securing that three-digit dialing, which became the brand, Pennsylvania 811 or Colorado 811. Everybody in the US has

really, not everybody, but most have adopted that brand and it became the calling card or as Bob Kipp used to say, it became the Montreal Canadian's logo.

(16:21):

It was the thing. It was the brand and touching on his hockey and Canadian roots, but it became the brand and very much is today. That is it.

Bill Kiger (16:32):

Well, Bob worked for Bell as

Mike Sullivan (16:34):

Well. He did. Yes, he did. Bell International. Bell Canada. Yeah. And so he understood that. He saw the value, obviously. But despite those advancements, it's a little frustrating to a degree that we're still seeing a number of damages roughly, I think the 2024 dirt report, roughly 25% of all damages is the root cause analysis indicates because there was no locate request. And I wonder, is that simply a result of more reporting, which is good? You want an abundance of reporting to conduct that root cause analysis, or is it that we're missing something? I'm just curious to hear your take on that after all these years.

Bill Kiger (17:22):

Well, back in my days prior to what we just talked about, I was a field engineer at Bell, and I had a lot plan that I was given responsibility for. They were growing about 250 lots a year, and the year prior, they had 26 damages. I said, "This is unacceptable. This is absolutely ridiculous." So I went out and it was the same contractor doing the same thing, essentially digging the foundation hole and everything else to build that home. And so you had essentially five or six different opportunities to damage facilities. And I said, "Joe, why are you hitting my cable?" He said, "I can't see those little boxes that you put that are flush with the ground and they're almost the same color as the ground, so I can't see them. I can't make this work." He said, "Come up here and sit in my seat.

(18:28):

Can you see them?" I said, "Joe, I'll be back after lunch and I'll make you see them." Now, I was told this morning by you know who, my wife, that I shouldn't tell this story. I'm going to anyway.

Mike Sullivan (18:45):

Trust me, it'd be fine.

Bill Kiger (18:46):

Okay. So I said, "You're going to be able to see them and if you hit my cable, I'm going to kick your ass. You understand me?" Now, in those days, I could do it and I could probably get away with it, but obviously I'm too old for that now, even though I still have a big mouth about it because I've done this to other contractors. I had a contractor in State College about a year ago who I went up to see and he had damaged a 3,600 pair cable right in front of the computer center in State College, Pennsylvania. And I said, "What are you doing?" I said, "You damaged that cable. It cost you \$200,000, and now you're working right over top of the same conduit, which has that same cable in it. Stop." And it didn't stop. So then I said, "Stop," and much louder enough that I drew the Penn State engineer that was responsible for the project and several other people.

(20:01):

And when I finished with my instructions as to what they needed to do to protect those facilities that were exposed, because he had a gas line, two water lines, the telephone line, a steam line, all exposed in an excavation right on the corner of this intersection. And he was fumbling with a large radius, curb radius that probably weighed six, 700 pounds.

(20:33):

So I told him stop playing with it, go find some slings and put some slings on it and pull it out of there safely. And they actually listened. So things don't change. When you don't call, you think you're getting away with it. And one of the first movies that came out was something called What's It Going to Cost You? And that was a contractor who said, "I can take the fur off a pussycat with a backhoe."

(21:10):

And then at the very end of the film, he's in a phone booth. Today, people don't know what that is anymore, but he drops his dime that he was going to call on the ground and it zooms down to the ground where the dime is and says, "What's it going to cost here across the bottom of the screen?" But people really don't comprehend what they're getting themselves into, what problems they cause, what issues they trigger. And I've spent 50 plus years of my life trying to get people to understand that and know that they've got to plan their excavation. The call is only one part of it.

Mike Sullivan (21:59):

Exactly.

Bill Kiger (21:59):

The notification. You have to prepare for that. You have to know what you're doing in the way of putting all of the parts and pieces together prior to your excavation and conveying them to the local center, whether it's click or call. And I think you and I both know that click is the better of the options, and we need to make sure that people understand that, not just some people. Everybody.

Mike Sullivan (22:30):

Everybody.

Bill Kiger (22:31):

But I think one of the thing that I've learned just in the last few months is that people don't necessarily know what Pennsylvania 811 is, what Underground Safety Partners is. They know call before you dig.

Mike Sullivan (22:49):

Yes. And that's all I care

Bill Kiger (22:50):

About. That's like Kleenex and Xerox. That's the term or the way that they understand what we're talking about. So I think we still have a lot of work to do. When I got involved, it was 50%. So we've knocked it down to 25. That's great. And we got a lot more to go.

Mike Sullivan (23:13):

We do. And that's one of the biggest challenges is promoting awareness, you can shout it from the rooftops repeatedly in a choir and not everybody's going to hear it. And that's always been the

Bill Kiger ([23:26](#)):

Challenge. This is something I did, and I don't know whether you can see this on the screen or not, but when you wiggle the picture, the street goes away. Oh

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

Yeah. Yeah.

Bill Kiger ([23:37](#)):

This is 1985. I won a CLIO award with this, and it's a postcard.

Mike Sullivan ([23:45](#)):

Yeah. And that would still work today. It would. It absolutely would.

Bill Kiger ([23:51](#)):

Well, the backhoe looks a little dated.

Mike Sullivan ([23:54](#)):

Yeah, but unfortunately, the context isn't dated. It still applies today. One of the - And

Bill Kiger ([24:03](#)):

You see the message at the top, see what you should be missing.

Mike Sullivan ([24:07](#)):

Yep. Well, then exactly.

Bill Kiger ([24:10](#)):

Those are things that they need to know.

Mike Sullivan ([24:13](#)):

Well, the common person really has no idea until they need us. And you heard in a podcast, and I've mentioned before, a year ago when we were in Dallas and I was trying to get home, the airports were shut down because somebody hit fiber optics that was providing radar and et cetera to the airports. And this is in the US where they're requesting a locate as a law. You have to do that before you dig. And what happened? I never saw the results of that incident, but the cost, the societal cost around that was in roughly 35 to \$50 million is what the information I've seen. And there's not always going to be a fatality. There's not always going to be an injury, but there's always going to be a societal cost. And that's what we're paying for every single time, and that's what we're trying to get around.

([25:08](#)):

One of the things I wanted to talk to you about, and this is really the central focus of one of the reasons why I wanted to have you on today, is the story of Alberta One Call. Now, you're one of the pioneers obviously, and you're still active, very active. But the pioneers here in Canada, gentleman by the name of Scott Henley that we both know. And of course, my predecessor, Bob Chisholm, Lorraine Lawson, they were the champions here in Alberta. But the 1979, we had the Millwoods incident just outside of

Edmonton. That was a big catalyst to create Alberta One Call. But you were involved in all of that, not somebody you know, you were involved. And tell me about that, because that to me is, I don't want that story to be lost in time. I really want to have people understand what the impact was of that relationship with Alberta and Pennsylvania and you.

Bill Kiger ([26:19](#)):

Well, again, going back to my 1975 activity, and I went and by phone, called individuals that I knew from the telephone company that were involved in other states. And the first symposium, which was in Pittsburgh in 1975, October 28th, if you want to be technical about it, it had 44 people from 22 states, all word of mouth. So I'll probably never get over doing things that way because it's the way I grew up. But having people to talk about damage prevention and how you do it best is something that I've been very passionate about from day one, because one person knows one perspective. When you get a group together and they understand what issues you have, they can put their heads together, work together and solve problems. And I think that's where I found the Canadian brothers knew about the problem, knew that they needed it.

([27:37](#)):

And I'm going to mention the name, Ken Digweed, who was with the Gold Dig. He was with Alberta Government Telephone Company. Yeah.

Mike Sullivan ([27:47](#)):

AGT.

Bill Kiger ([27:48](#)):

Up in Edmonton. And so I did some, matter of fact, I don't think I'll ever forget the oil and gas event that I did in the middle of a blizzard in Edmonton. It was seven degrees Fahrenheit. That's a summer day in

Mike Sullivan ([28:10](#)):

Celsius.

Bill Kiger ([28:15](#)):

I had to drag the booth, which was not one you could just carry. I had to drag it through the snow. There was about 12 inches of snow on the ground from my hotel to the convention center, set it up and get it. And there was a fair number of people. I was very, very pleased with the turnout that they had. Of course, they deal with that things. It's not like they don't have a Chinook come to and clear out the thing in a few hours. No,

Mike Sullivan ([28:48](#)):

They're not in the banana belt

Bill Kiger ([28:49](#)):

Like

Mike Sullivan ([28:49](#)):

Calgary.

Bill Kiger ([28:50](#)):

Well, it blew my mind the first time I flew in to Calgary and it was snowing. And by the time I got the rental car and got into Calgary, the snow was gone.

Mike Sullivan ([29:03](#)):

Yeah. Yep.

Bill Kiger ([29:06](#)):

Just couldn't figure it out. So Scott helped me in that case. But again, I met Scott because he was, I guess, one of the people that the committee that I had been working with. And again, I can't remember John's last name from, I think he was with the gas company.

Mike Sullivan ([29:27](#)):

John Fildes.

Bill Kiger ([29:29](#)):

That's it.

Mike Sullivan ([29:29](#)):

Yep.

Bill Kiger ([29:30](#)):

And John and I had many conversations together and listening to his dreams and where this could go, and I really congratulate Scott and Bob and you for where you brought it. And even back then we were talking about other provinces coming on. We talked to BC and BC said, "Well, we just fax them to everybody."

Mike Sullivan ([29:57](#)):

Yeah.

Bill Kiger ([30:00](#)):

And I'm like, "What?"

([30:04](#)):

So that started, I think, a relationship that grew. And as I mentioned, I spent quite a number of trips up there, a number of days up there because getting the things out to Medicine Hat and all those outlying areas that had the need and to get the message through it. And then of course they got involved with Manitoba and Saskatchewan and we made presentations there as well. And sometimes it was Scott and I, sometimes it was just me. But we sowed the seed and started the cultivation that has grown. And I don't feel that there was a issue with the border to me other than I brought some pens up with color code on the side of them. And the pen cost me 25 cents here and they wanted 25 cents to bring it in. I said, "Well, I'm just giving it to the committee."

Mike Sullivan ([31:15](#)):

Not selling these.

Bill Kiger ([31:17](#)):

No. So that was the only border issue I had. And the other problem with that is when you brought things across, there was a timing issue because you had to go through a broker and those kinds of things, which is part of business. It is. You just have to plan your, again, plan, plan, plan, plan. And those things you get used to and you find ways, you find solutions, you find brokers that know their business and get the message to who it needs to get to or get the product to where it needs to go to serve.

Mike Sullivan ([31:59](#)):

So when Alberta One Call was incorporated in 1982 and we took our first locate request, our first call in 1984, but it wasn't Albertans that were taking those calls. This is a part of the story that I need people to hear from you. I mean, you were right there. So how did that all work? Because we didn't have the infrastructure ready to go. That's how I understand it, but you did. And for, I think, is it two years you operated Alberta One Call?

Bill Kiger ([32:36](#)):

Yeah. I mean, we brought Lorraine and Scott down and trained them and explained how we hire people and all the things that you need to run a call center. And in the meantime, we did the actual daily stuff for that period of time, but I think it was more like four years that we took the after hours calls. And the only thing we had issues that getting our people not to say zip code because it very much upset the Canadian

Mike Sullivan ([33:11](#)):

Callers.

Bill Kiger ([33:12](#)):

Well, it took out that

Mike Sullivan ([33:13](#)):

Veil of secrecy that, oh hey, you weren't Canadian.

Bill Kiger ([33:19](#)):

But I think we got through it. And as the team built in Calgary at that point in time, then obviously she and they ran the thing out of Calgary. But still the computer systems were still in Pittsburgh.

Mike Sullivan ([33:40](#)):

So

Bill Kiger ([33:40](#)):

It was a remote computing world back then. And until the internet, you didn't have any choice.

Mike Sullivan ([33:47](#)):

That's right. And that's so important for people to realize in my view that yes, Alberta One Call, we took our first locate request 1984 and we really got off the ground a couple of years early when it was incorporated, but we needed help to do that. Yes, we were the first One Call system in Canada, but we wouldn't have gotten off the ground had it not been for our friends in the United States that had gone through this already. And when I look back and I see that my own father was involved in a lot of this pre-work almost, as early as 1967 when he was with Bell in Montreal and doing a lot of work in the US, that relationship has been there for decades upon decades. And it started small and it's only flourished. And now we look at OCSI has had its high water marks as well.

(34:49):

And now we look at the Facility Notification Centers Association, the FNCA. And once again, we're seeing a collaboration of efforts. Yes, it's centralized, it began in the US, but the vision was always international. And at the moment it's only Alberta and Ontario that are part of that international feel, I guess, but it's in its infancy. And I'm really impressed with the FNCA. I think it's hitting all the right marks in terms of its breadth. We have committees for data, human resources, operations, and every facet really of operations. And it allows us to talk to one another and create and learn from each other, create those best practices that pertain directly to us. I'm really anxious to see where it goes. And we had a call just yesterday, the board of directors for the FNCA, and we talked a lot about that, the growth of the FNCA.

(36:01):

And it started at a time really during COVID when it was hard to start anything. And so that was a challenge, but I think only now we're seeing that effort. Where do you see this all going in the next five to 10 years?

Bill Kiger (36:18):

Well, I think just like our survival during the World Wars, we found that working together gets the job done. And I think sharing our thoughts, sharing our solutions, sharing how we do things, others benefit. And it's been from my time as a teenager, finding that working together, sharing teamwork is the right way to get things done. And everybody can't be there every moment of every day. So we all have to work together. We all need to share and to. I have an idea, I share it. I want you to do the same thing right back. This whole world would be better if we all did our part to share and to be part of the solution, not the one screaming and whining about the problem.

Mike Sullivan (37:18):

Yeah. I couldn't agree with you more, Bill. I've always been one to see the big picture. I'm just wired that way and I don't know what prompts me to be wired that way. And I'm constantly looking for a better way, a better solution. And when I see one, I want to bring others with me. And I've been accused of empire building in this space and it's like if I was going to do that, it wouldn't be for a nonprofit. And if that's the case, if some of the things that I've been involved with over the years has been perceived that way, well then so be it. But the reason maybe is because I'm not afraid of turf. I'm not afraid of my own turf.

(38:11):

The public awareness, whether I worked for the pipeline industry or the regulator, all the things I did before I came here, we borrowed and we stole and we begged for ideas from our partners. But for the only reason is that we admired what they did, what they accomplished, and we wanted to do the same. And whenever the parties I worked with, we had a good idea, we were going to share it and shout it

from the rooftops. I think this is a better way. What do you think? And let's improve it together. Nobody advances if we don't all advance together. That's kind of how I see it.

Bill Kiger ([38:54](#)):

Well, it's like mapping. It's like mapping. And I think we all every day have a need for good mapping. And the better you're mapping, the better your operation is. No matter where you're at, no matter what you're doing, knowing how to get from point A to point B is a critical component of doing it. This fight about my system's better than your system and all those nonsense, this is all about all of us having a safer, better world to live in and making this a shining star of working together, not just doing it in our own fort.

Mike Sullivan ([39:41](#)):

Yeah. I mean, there's no point in doing this in only your backyard, right? And so Bill, I really admire you. I admire your career. And I'm not alone in that, obviously. There's a lot of people out there feeling exactly the same way. And yes, the longevity of your career is impressive, but it's what you've done with it, which is far more impressive. And you speak so eloquently about the history of it, that your involvement in it was a service to a degree, but it wasn't all about you at all. I mean, you did what you did for the industry. And I hope that people listening to our podcast today and years from now, because it'll be on the net for wherever, and maybe they'll be listening to it in the interstellar world of somewhere else. But I hope people realize that we're all in this together is really what it comes down to.

([40:45](#)):

We're all in this together and you've been waving that flag for 50 years and waving it hard and I -

Bill Kiger ([40:55](#)):

Vigor. Vigorously.

Mike Sullivan ([40:55](#)):

Vigorously, yes. And I appreciate that. I know that everybody I know who knows you appreciates that. And I'm so glad you're able to finally join me on the podcast today. We've been talking about doing this for a year, Bill, but you're a busy guy and thanks for making the time for me. I wish you the absolute best as we go forward and what an honor it is to work alongside you. I really

Bill Kiger ([41:27](#)):

Appreciate it. And I, back at you, am very pleased with the progress you've shown. And I think Scott and Bob did great work.

Mike Sullivan ([41:36](#)):

Amazing work.

Bill Kiger ([41:38](#)):

Over the time, Scott was the, how do I want to put this? You had to frisk Scott after he came out of your stockroom because he wanted to take as many things back with him as he saw. Yeah.

Mike Sullivan ([41:54](#)):

See, we begged, we bored, we stole. And he made no bones about it.

Bill Kiger ([42:00](#)):

Amen. And if he was still with us today, he would admit to it.

Mike Sullivan ([42:05](#)):

Oh yeah, he would. He

Bill Kiger ([42:06](#)):

Would. Again, one of my, I guess, most precious points is meeting people like you, people like Bob and Scott, people like John Files, Ken Digweed, John 14. All those people help me grow. And that's what this world is all about. It's to help you grow, but you don't have to do this alone. This comes out of working together and out of safe planning for whatever you're going to do, whether it's a project or a system, planning and putting all the ducks in a row, make this work. And then I can't tell you how many times I've run into people that I hadn't seen in many, many years and they remember things that we did together. And that's a critical component of your life. You feel so much better when somebody remembers what you accomplished together, because I wasn't alone in doing that. I had other people helping me.

([43:10](#)):

Oh, absolutely. I had other people not necessarily helping me, but we did overcome whatever obstacles were thrown in front of us. And I think all of us are better off to this day because we work together. I agree. There are providers out there that took all my ideas and used them to make a good living.

Mike Sullivan ([43:36](#)):

But

Bill Kiger ([43:37](#)):

That's not what I was in this for. I was in this to make people safe and to make this country, this continent safer. And I had to give up a trip to Brazil because of one of my family members having something that was more important to me, a family. And that's something JD got to go and he blamed me for him losing his sunglasses on the beach. I'm like, "I didn't tell you to go to the beach." But again, sharing this with. I've had probably people from 20 countries come to my center and see what we do and go back with ideas, go back with things that they can make better, make us all proud of what we do together. And that's a critical

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

Component to this. And that's exactly what we're in it for, right? So a tip of the hat to you, a tip of the hat to people like Scott and Bob and everybody who came before me, and for those who come after, that at some point we'll all pass the baton.

Bill Kiger ([44:46](#)):

I may still be here.

Mike Sullivan ([44:47](#)):

Yeah. You probably will. I think you're just part of the fabric, right? But at some point we'll pass the baton and I hope that it continues because it's been an amazing history, but there's so much more to do.

Bill Kiger ([45:03](#)):

I'm in.

Mike Sullivan ([45:04](#)):

So Bill, thanks for joining me. Thank you.

Bill Kiger ([45:06](#)):

Take care.

Mike Sullivan ([45:10](#)):

That's going to wrap things up on the Safety Moment Podcast. I want to thank our guest, Mr. Bill Keiger, for joining me today and also thank our producer Stories and Strategies. I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any directory you're listening on, and please do leave a rating. It helps us a lot. You can follow us on social media channels, just about all of them. We're on X at utility_safety. We're on Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook. And if you'd like to send us a note, maybe you have an episode idea, you can email us at info@utilitysafety.ca and put podcast in the subject header, and that information will get to me. I'm Mike Sullivan, president of Utility Safety Partners. Click to know what's above and below. Does one click cost you nothing and not clicking, that could cost you everything.