

## Minimizing Injury Risk around Gas Lines

Delmarva Power (an Exelon Company) claims to be, “dedicated to providing education and assistance to customers and excavators regarding safe excavation around underground gas and electric lines” and they clearly are. Many urban areas of Delaware have at least portions served with natural gas and there are even some examples of community-wide propane systems. Gas pipelines and service lines are commonly found in the right-of-way and can be a serious risk for roadway maintenance and capital projects. Delmarva Power built a special demonstration trailer to highlight the risks in working around gas lines and how to mitigate the danger. They brought the trailer to the Roadway Management Conference (RMC) this October in Rehoboth Beach and provided an engaging safety demonstration; we were lucky enough to capture it on [video](#).



The RMC is hosted annually by the five-state (PA, WV, VA, MD, DE) Mid-Atlantic Region of LTAP and T2 Centers and is moved around the region. The conference is targeted towards local agency personnel who design, construct, and maintain roadways. Three days of technical training and demonstrations are combined with ample time for attendees to meet each other and form important relationships that can serve them for years.

The target audience of the RMC routinely work around utilities and it is essential that they understand the dangers and proper safety measures to avoid injury to themselves and the public. We are grateful to Delmarva Power for this important safety demonstration.

The power company has many online resources for the protection of public works personnel and the public at large. Their Call 811 Before You Dig [page](#) reminds us that “smart digging means calling 811 before each job,” regardless whether it is a large construction job or a home project. There you also will find color codes for marked utilities and save digging tips. Remarkable for this day and age, they note that, “Nationwide, one out of every three damages to underground utilities is the result of digging without calling 811.”

Their Dig Safely [page](#) digs deeper into a number of excavation safety topics. For example, there is more information about the 811 system, pipeline markers, definitions of locator marks, tolerance zone information, and what to do if you contact a utility line. Their Worker Beware electric and natural gas safety [videos](#) put risk to workers in context with real-world injuries and perspective from the injured, as well as what to do to help avoid those fates. They even provide specific winter safety [tips](#) relative to natural gas systems.

Delmarva Power is naturally interested in protecting their natural gas infrastructure, but clearly they are equally interested in minimizing the risk of those utilities to roadway workers and the public. We were delighted to see them at the RMC and appreciate the important safety demonstration they provided.

