



MOREHEAD UTILITY PLANT BOARD

Serving You Over 50 Years

December 26, 2012

Mr. Sam Hall
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Office of Pipeline Safety, PHP-20
2180 Adventure Lane
Maidens, VA 23102

RE: Morehead Utility Plant Board
2011 DOT Technical Assistance Grant
DTPH56-11-G-PHPT01, \$50,000

Dear Mr. Hall,

Morehead Utility Plant Board obtained the 2011 DOT Technical Assistance Grant to improve pipeline safety in the community (Morehead, KY). The specific concern addressed during the project was "outside force" damage, as USDOT data for 2002-2003 indicated that it contributed to the largest number of pipeline incidents. This project included several locations in the community with higher population concentrations and sensitive environments that are especially vulnerable to pipeline failure (i.e. sections of the Daniel Boone National Forest, Morehead State University, St. Claire Regional Medical Center, and SRG Global, a Guardian Company). Greater pipeline safety was achieved during this project with expanded communication, improved knowledge and technology, and special training for Utility workers and emergency responders in the community.

Morehead Utility Plant Board expanded communication concerning pipeline safety in the community by engaging students in Rowan County Middle School, distributing public awareness marketing materials, and hosting a damage prevention program for contractors to foster a communication link between the Utility and those who excavate. Combined, these efforts involved numerous people in the community from various backgrounds in an open communication and awareness initiative for pipeline safety.

A professional consultant from R. L. Wingate & Associates, Inc. was hired to teach students in the Rowan County Middle School about Pipeline Safety. "Scratch and Sniff" public awareness materials were distributed at the school to help children and adults identify the rotten egg odor added to natural gas by the Utility for leak detection. These public awareness materials also include instructions on how to respond and who to contact in the case of a natural gas leak. In addition to leak detection literature, the Utility also published a damage prevention advertisement in *The Morehead News*, and distributed damage prevention pamphlets to minimize the risk of damages.

Morehead Utility Plant Board also sponsored a KY 811 One Call Seminar training event and luncheon for contractors at the Ponderosa Restaurant in Morehead, KY on Wednesday, January 18th, 2012. Instructor Tim Vaughn from Kentucky Underground Protection was the speaker at the training event. This public awareness program not only offered training for contractors, but facilitated a communication link between the Utility and contractors that will reduce the risk of damage from excavation by a third party (a type of "outside force" damage).

The technology and knowledge of Morehead Utility Plant Board was improved with the completion of a leak survey by professional consultants, the purchase of a Remote Methane Leak Detector (RMLD), and an extension for the Utility's GIS mapping software. The professional leak survey identified weak points in the system and provided the Utility with better knowledge of its condition. The RMLD is a reliable, efficient, and safe tool that enables the Utility to conduct its own leak surveys in the future. GIS SDI mapping extension and software components allow the Utility to conduct network analysis and produce map books of the natural gas system. Network analysis and tracing assists the Utility in efficiently locating valves to isolate line breaks within the system. In addition, the map books that can now be created are tools the Utility's service men take into the field to locate and repair lines.

Finally, staff and emergency responder training provided by Morehead Utility Plant Board has increased the pipeline safety in the area by improving the skills and knowledge of the Utility's employees and emergency responders in Rowan County. Four Morehead Utility Plant Board Employees were trained by professional consultants on leak detection methods using the RMLD. This training enables the employees to effectively and safely monitor the natural gas system. Emergency responders from all Rowan County fire departments were offered basic natural gas and emergency response training from a professional consultant. Appropriate training for the emergency responders ensures fast and effective action during emergencies and will limit the impact in the event of a natural gas incident.

The Pipeline Safety Grant Technical Assistance funds have significantly improved natural gas pipeline safety in Morehead Utility Plant Board's community. The expected outputs identified in the grant agreement have been fulfilled, as described in the preceding narrative. The expanded communication, improved knowledge and technology, and training will ensure a safer future by preventing and mitigating "outside force" damages to natural gas pipelines in the area.

Best Regards,

Robert M. Nickell

By 

Robert M. Nickell
General Manager