



***South Dakota 811 BOARD TRAINING SESSION***  
***August 14, 2019***

**The board was asked to share their minimum expectations for the session. They were as follows:**

1. Learn to wear their 811 hat at board meetings
2. To gain guidance on roles and responsibilities for individual board members
3. Learn what their collective roles are as a board
4. Create an environment for freedom of expression
5. Preserve 811 for kids/grandkids
6. Better appreciate who we represent
7. Create a greater professional organization
8. Help make board work more efficiently
9. Move forward with clarity

**The board then shared their extraordinary expectations for the session:**

1. Have the law clarified and a better understanding of the administrative rules
2. Learn how to have South Dakota 811 set the standard for other state boards
3. Make the 811 message more effective
4. Develop standard board practices for efficiency
5. Obtain alignment for our initiatives
6. Deal with abandoned utilities
7. Develop an overall plan for short and long term future
8. Reduce violations by 50% in 5 years
9. At the end of the day... One opinion – One board



**The board was asked to identify what they considered a weakness within the South Dakota 811 board/process:**

1. Responsiveness of complainants
2. Contractors not involved in the 811 process enough
3. Create requirements for data collection and data sharing
4. Need to better define our goals
5. Spending too much time on the now... instead of the future
6. Complaint process needs improved
7. Our relationship as a state agency
8. More effective enforcement panel utilizing consistent practices
9. Vague locate requests

**The board was then asked to identify what they considered the strengths of the organization**

1. Advertising, education and the personal contacts
2. Executive leadership
3. We've got the right board members
4. We stay informed
5. Diversity
6. Overall process/Texas811
7. Good state laws
8. Financial strength
9. DPC meetings
10. Board communicates well



The Board then entered into a brainstorming session to discuss the **purpose of South Dakota as compared to the mission statement**. They were asked to think, write and share their ideas in regards to the purpose of the organization. Not that the mission statement was wrong but define the purpose of the organization so that when someone asked them, “what is the purpose of South Dakota 811,” they could all give a single unified response.

**The Board’s responses were fairly unified as follows...**

1. **Protect utilities and people**
2. **Enforce/educate the public and stakeholders as it relates to safety**

The board was then asked to continue to brainstorm and finally was asked to come up with a single statement that would best define the above responses. Following a lengthy discussion, the board was asked to think, write and share again a response to the following statement.

**In order to achieve your mission statement or in order to become the leading resource for damage prevention for all underground utilities or in order to achieve your agreed upon purpose, as a board WE MUST...**

The board then began to list individual ideas they thought were critical to achieving their goal. Then they were asked to group them into like categories. The board prioritized five (5) areas necessary to achieve their stated goal.

The results of the brainstorming session are listed below in order of priority. 1a and 1b were identified as the drivers for improvement. For example, the board collectively recognized that in order to accomplish the purpose of South Dakota 811, they concluded that it would require board commitment and clearer administrative rules. They have stated that everything else the organization does will depend on the successful implementation of 1a and 1b.

So, the five categories are listed below, along with supporting and more detailed ideas defining each category.



***In order to become the leading resource for the damage prevention of underground utilities or to achieve your agreed upon purpose we must...***

**1a. Board commitment & collaboration**

- a. Board must understand what it takes to be 811, not just their utility perspective
- b. Measure our growth as a board
- c. Set goals
- d. Learn to work collectively, not just as an individual
- e. Budget for growth

**1b. Laws and rules**

- a. Change/tweak a few of our laws
- b. Identify which of our laws need improving
- c. Create /execute requirements for technology such as GPS/GIS
- d. Set strategic direction

**3. Walk the walk (board presence and influence outside the board room)**

- a. Board should attend Digger meetings
- b. Man booths at fairs/schools
- c. Board needs to get more involved outside the board room



**4. Create effective outreach to stakeholders**

- a. Stronger visibility... like large signs
- b. Generate excitement and respect for the 811 process
- c. Learn to work together
- d. Be accessible
- e. Form partnerships with the stakeholders
- f. Find ways to reward those who comply

**5. Education effectiveness**

- a. Continue to look for better ways to perform all parts of 811
- b. Make more \$ available for educational opportunities for stakeholders
- c. Make our website more interactive
- d. Figure out how to better utilize mobile app
- e. Find ways to reach out to people that are not following the law to change their thought process



Larry,

The brief amount of time we spent with the board was very productive. Working with them was enjoyable and I really appreciated their involvement and enthusiasm. They were engaged throughout the session and discussed real issues that were obviously important to them.

It seemed obvious to me that the board is prepared to look at the next level on critical issues involving enforcement, expansion of the board and legacy.

The training session established a philosophy of the board, not the plan to achieve a goal. The next logical step would be to have a session designed to establish measurable action plans to accomplish the board's goals... each goal requires an action plan that is both defensible and measurable. For example, when it starts, what are the steps, who is responsible for implementation and when it stops.

An observation that I'll share with you and the board is (from my perspective) that there seemed to be considerable crossover between the roles of the enforcement board and the 811 board roles. And that's understandable given that the 811 board is the enforcement board. However, it also places a greater responsibility on the board to be able to keep them separate for the next generation of board members.

I can think of issues that are strictly 811 issues that may not be enforcement issues. If that is true, then both roles need to stay in their own lanes.

Having worked with many 811 boards across the country, you are fortunate to have these folks. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve as a facilitator at this meeting.

I would consider it a privilege to work with you and the board in future training opportunities, should you find value in working with me.

Thank you kindly,

Roger Cox