



# Virginia's Damage Prevention Progress and Exemption Data

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*Virginia State Corporation Commission*

## Division of Utility and Railroad Safety

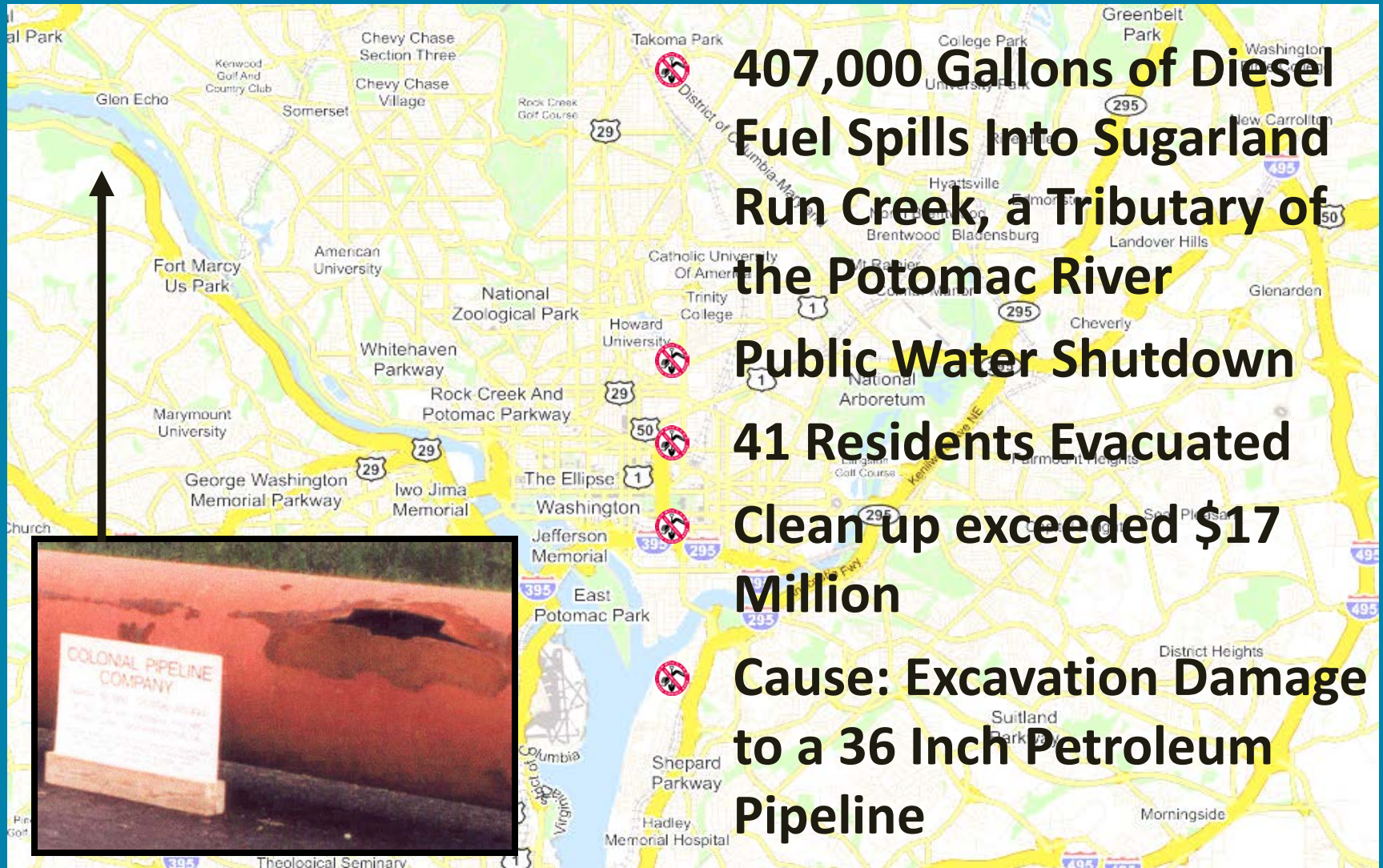
The Division of Utility and Railroad Safety assists the SCC's three Commissioners in administering safety programs involving jurisdictional natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline facilities, railroads, and underground utility damage prevention.

# Background



- 1992 – The Virginia Commission formed a Task Force to study Virginia's Damage Prevention Act. Stakeholders agreed on elements needed for an effective damage prevention program:
  - Effective communication between operators and excavators
  - Support and partnership of stakeholders in all phases of the program
  - Operator's use of internal performance measures
  - Effective employee training
  - Partnership in public education
  - Commission's role as a partner and facilitator
  - Fair and effective enforcement of the law
  - Use of available technologies to enhance all phases of damage prevention
  - Analysis of data to continually improve program effectiveness

# Reston, Virginia - 1993



**407,000 Gallons of Diesel Fuel Spills Into Sugarland Run Creek, a Tributary of the Potomac River**

**Public Water Shutdown**

**41 Residents Evacuated**

**Clean up exceeded \$17 Million**

**Cause: Excavation Damage to a 36 Inch Petroleum Pipeline**



Theological Seminary

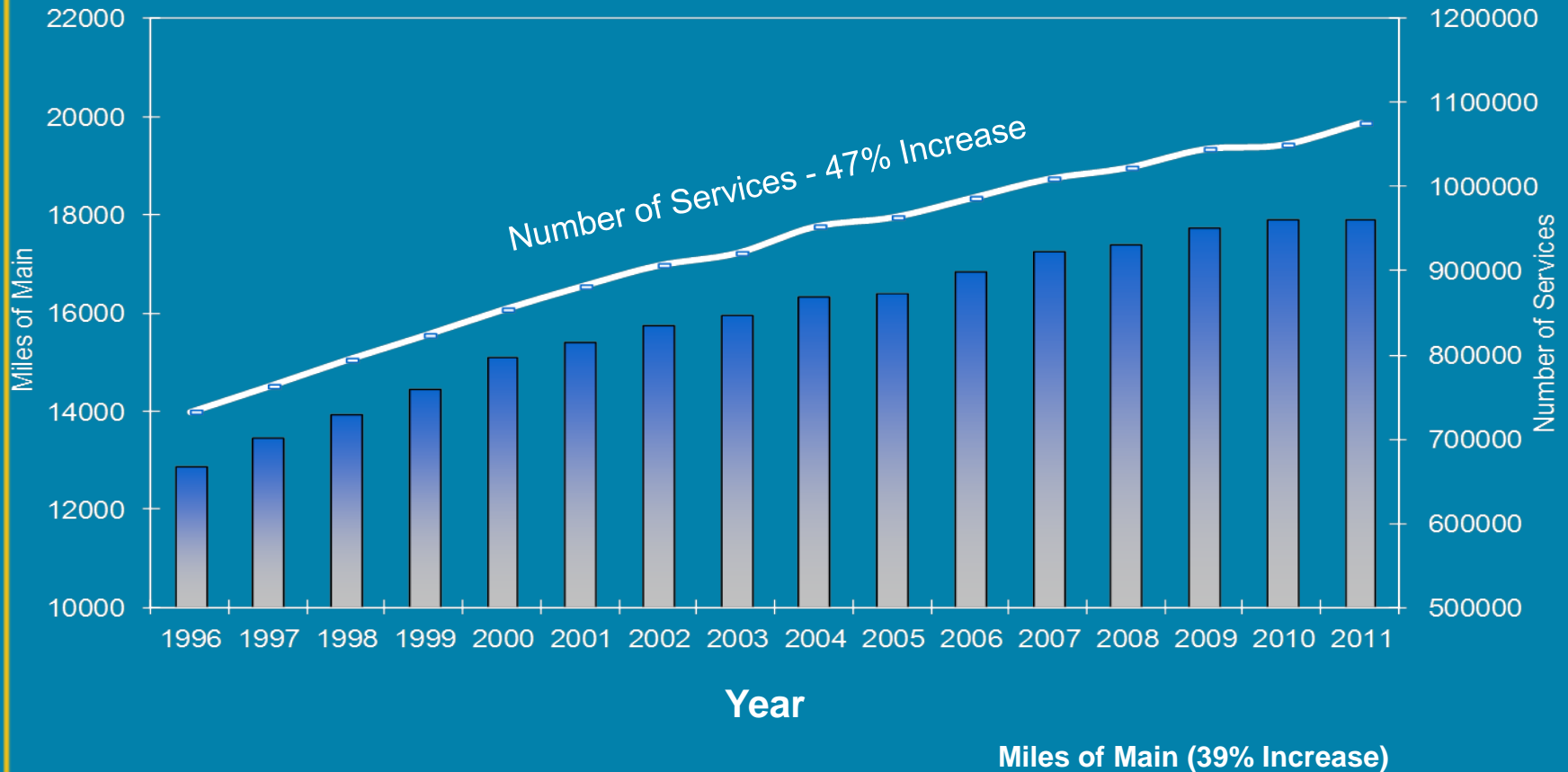
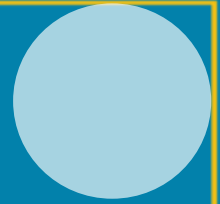


# Virginia Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act

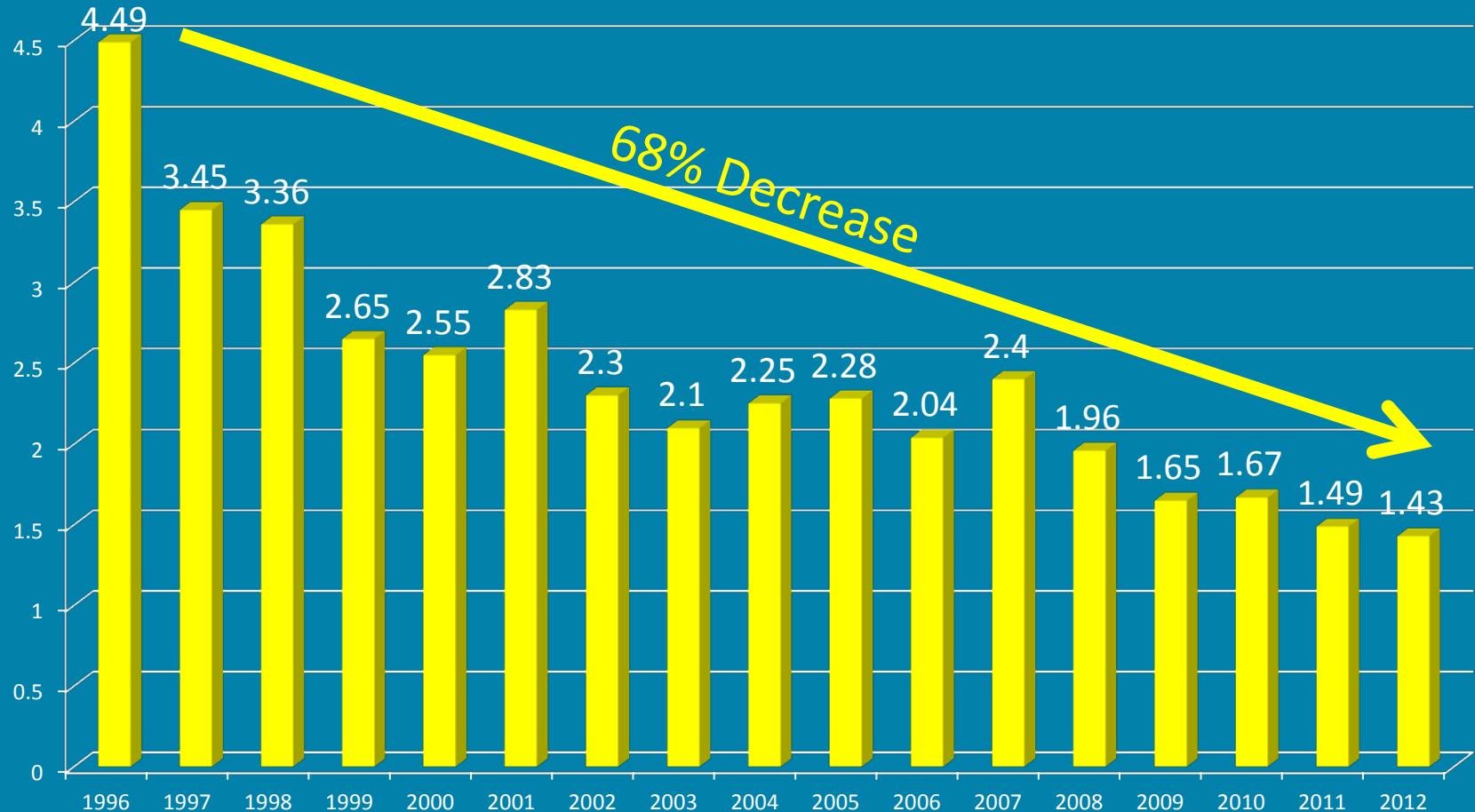
## Significant changes to the Act Effective January, 1995

- Created the “*Positive Response System*”
- Created the “*three-hour notice*” for clear evidence
- Required “*white lining*” when specific location of excavation area could not be given
- Authorized the *Commission to enforce the Act*
- Authorized the Commission to appoint the *Damage Prevention Advisory Committee*
- Established the “*Special Fund Account*” to track penalties collected
- Directed the Commission to use these *funds for enforcement and public education*

# Gas Distribution Growth



# Gas Damages per 1,000 Excavation Tickets



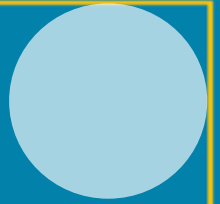
# Nine Current Exemptions



- Hand digging performed by a homeowner
- Agricultural tilling of soil
- Excavation by a railroad on its right of way
- Excavation or demolition during an emergency
- Excavation during an unforeseen occurrence impairing road systems
- Routine pavement and right of way maintenance
- Mining in permitted areas
- Excavation by an operator to locate its lines
- Installation of a sign by hand or foot



# Exemption Data Summary



- In the last 4 years, 396 damages to gas lines occurred while excavating under an exemption
- This is 7.5% of the total gas damages in the state
- The exemption for homeowners was the cause of 7.2% of gas damages
- All other exemptions combined only constitute .3% of the gas damages

# Exemption Data

