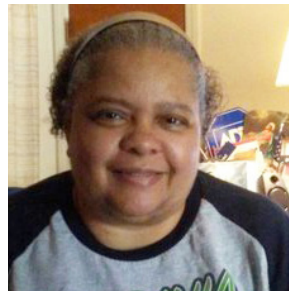
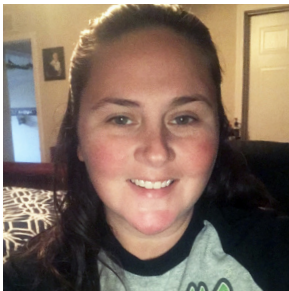


# The Virginia811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



VIRGINIA811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2020



# CONTENTS

Letter from the CEO ..... 3

Feature Article ..... 4

Virginia811 Academy Update ..... 6

Cyber Security ..... 8

Election Day Excavator Awareness ..... 9

Employee Spotlight ..... 10

Work Anniversaries ..... 11

Virginia811 Wellness ..... 11

Virginia811 Display Truck Update ..... 12

Golden Shovel Award ..... 13

Message from HR ..... 13



## LETTER FROM THE CEO

### B. Scott Crawford

2020 is coming to a close, and we can all begin to breathe a sigh of relief. While we still have several months in front of us to continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, and sing Happy Birthday as we wash our hands, the promising news of two vaccines suggests there is a light at the end of this Pandemic tunnel.

2020 was a busy year in our industry. Ticket volume for Virginia811 was around 7% over 2019. Homeowner tickets were notably higher. Tickets originating through Internet channels have grown to account for over 67% of all tickets. We know our Locator friends have felt this increase in tickets and we thank them for all they do to work these tickets and locate underground utilities, all while having to adapt to new operating procedures brought about due to the Pandemic.

We all look forward to a very positive 2021. We will get through this Pandemic, and we will come out stronger, finding new ways to leverage technology to mitigate risk of damages to underground utilities.

I am excited about our launching of the Virginia811 Academy, an online learning system to facilitate Web Ticket Entry training. Along with this, a new webinar series has been launched, which will serve as short,

live, presentations related to specific topics related to ticket entry. Be sure to learn more about the Virginia811 Academy in this issue of The Virginia811 Dirt.

Also noteworthy is Virginia811’s completion of a project with Virginia Tech where we have created an artificial intelligence model to audit 100% of web tickets. 2021 will witness our continued work with Virginia Tech to fully implement this auditing algorithm. To support this, you can learn in this issue about our recent creation of a manager level position overseeing data analytics and QA/QC.

All of us at Virginia811 look forward to working with you all as we get through this Pandemic and continue to explore how we can drive damages of underground utilities down even further.

We hope you all have a Happy Holiday season and continue to stay safe and healthy.

Benjamin Scott Crawford



# A REFLECTION ON COVID'S IMPACT ON VIRGINIA811 AND LESSONS LEARNED

- B. Scott Crawford

## 2020 – A YEAR WE WILL DEFINITELY REMEMBER

The COVID-19 pandemic is unlike anything we've ever lived through. Wearing masks, practicing social distancing, reducing our social circles, and learning new ways to work have all become a part of our lives and changed us in significant ways. While our post-COVID world is still unclear, one thing is certain: we'll be talking about 2020 for some time, and we'll definitely be sharing our experiences with our children and grandchildren when they learn about the Pandemic in their history classes!

## 2020 – A YEAR THAT TOOK SUCH A DRAMATIC TURN

For Virginia811, the year began on a high note. We had recently occupied a brand-new contact center. We were looking forward to working closely with Roanoke City 911 as they planned to occupy their portion of the center with us. We were launching an improved Single Address Ticket application online. We were in the early stages of a partnership, funded through a PHMSA Grant, with Virginia Tech's Statistical Applications and Innovations Group (SAIG) to create an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model to enhance our auditing of Web Tickets. We were exploring building a new marketing department to help with overall damage prevention messaging. We were considering the idea of creating an online platform for Web Ticket Entry training. In short, we were on a roll!

The year was full of excitement and high hopes. Yes, we'd heard news stories about a new virus that had been identified in China, but would that really impact Virginia? Maybe we'd need to wash our hands more,

but this virus wouldn't be a big deal – now, those fires in Australia – that was something to worry about! And really? Brad and Jen were talking again? *Could they get back together?*

As March approached, I don't think any of us thought that by the end of the month over 90% of the Virginia811 team would be working offsite, or that by summer 100% would be working remotely. Despite this time of change and uncertainty, our services at Virginia811



were never compromised and our role in damage prevention was always secure. We worked tirelessly to prepare for anything that might come our way.

I don't think I've ever been more proud of the Virginia811 team as we came together creating plans to ensure business continuity, procuring needed equipment, and adapting within a constantly changing environment. Within weeks the Virginia811 operations model changed entirely, and to quote one of our team members, Marcy Carroll, we did so "without missing a beat!"

## 2020 – A YEAR OF LEARNING

Looking back, I know all of us in our industry, and beyond, have learned important lessons. Probably the most important lesson is the need to be flexible. In addition, we realized that we have some amazing technology at our fingertips to transform how we work – technology that was available pre-pandemic but viewed as a

threat to traditional management models and business operations, thus not fully utilized. The Pandemic has taught us that technology can help us operate more efficiently, communicate better, engage team members and stakeholders in new and substantive ways, while maintaining overall excellent productivity.

While working remotely at Virginia811, for example,

It's too early to determine COVID's true impact in regard to remote work and new business practices. Post-COVID, our hope is that the world opens up again with no real need for masks or social distancing, and that public spaces will fill once again. But the question remains: will business spaces fill as well? As Aristotle notes in Politics, "A social instinct is implanted in all men in nature." Man

“ I don't think I've ever been more proud of the Virginia811 team as we came together creating plans to ensure business continuity, procuring needed equipment, and adapting within a constantly changing environment. ”

we successfully completed the Artificial Intelligence model outlined in our PHMSA Grant. We tested the model successfully and we're exploring ways to fully implement this model in early 2021. We created a marketing department, and hired a new executive Head of Marketing along with three new marketing liaisons. We'll also be launching a new online Virginia811 Academy that will allow access to a computer-based learning module for Web Ticket Entry training and also create an engaging platform for current Web Ticket Entry users to gain access to online resources. The Academy will help with ticket entry, including both instructional videos and new live webinars. We've also partnered with GEOI in Raleigh, North Carolina, to implement a unique support program for GIS mapping, making the ability to update our mapping more efficient and accurate. We accomplished all this during a year where overall ticket volume was 7% over 2019!

is by nature social and craves human interaction. This basic instinct will pull us together in business settings, but it will be up to business leaders to identify how remote work will function in a post-COVID world.

## 2020 – YES, A YEAR WE WILL DEFINITELY REMEMBER, AND A YEAR OF LESSONS LEARNED

At Virginia811 our wish is for you and your loved ones to be safe and healthy, and for this Pandemic to end soon. We also hope that when this crisis becomes a thing of the past, we'll remain stronger in our commitment to protecting underground utilities, property and life. Let's also embrace the power of technology and learn to use it in new ways. Stay safe – and here's to a Happy and Healthy 2021!

*Oh, and I know the fires in Australia were controlled – but whatever happened with Brad and Jen?*



# New Online Training Site Aims to Keep Partners Safe Through Education

## Virginia811 Academy Soon to be Launched






Virginia811 continues to work with our partners making sure they get the training they need, when they need it. Over the last several months, Virginia811 team members have worked tirelessly on designing a variety of online training courses giving our partners the ability to train when they want it and how they want it. These courses will premier on a new website called Virginia811 Academy – Safety Through Education.

The Virginia811 Academy includes a variety of educational videos and other online tools designed to teach professional excavators how to accurately enter underground utility location requests using Virginia811's Web Ticket Entry (WTE) platform. Professional excavators will now no longer be required to take in-person or live, virtual training sessions, but will have the option to take advantage of the Virginia811 Academy's online resources so they can become qualified to enter their own requests online as opposed to calling 811.

Contacting Virginia811 and filling out a notice of excavation before digging protects underground

utility lines, the surrounding community, and most importantly - lives. The new WTE online learning gives professional excavators easy-to-use courses on ticket processing from the easiest to most complex tickets. Self-directed learning modules engage participants as they learn about the software used to process tickets. This facilitates how utility members and locators notify and mark underground utilities. Each training module is designed to walk users through the process step-by-step and can be completed at their own pace.

Users can choose one of three training methods to best match their learning style. These include:

-  Self-paced online videos with modules
-  Self-guided courses designed for those learners who prefer reading and following written instruction
-  Virtual, instructor-led courses with a qualified trainer

In addition to WTE, users can also take advantage of a new webinar series called Ticket Talk, which dives deep into the subject of web ticket entry with short, live presentations. Each session focuses on specific areas of user interest like mapping, excavation areas, positive response codes and more.



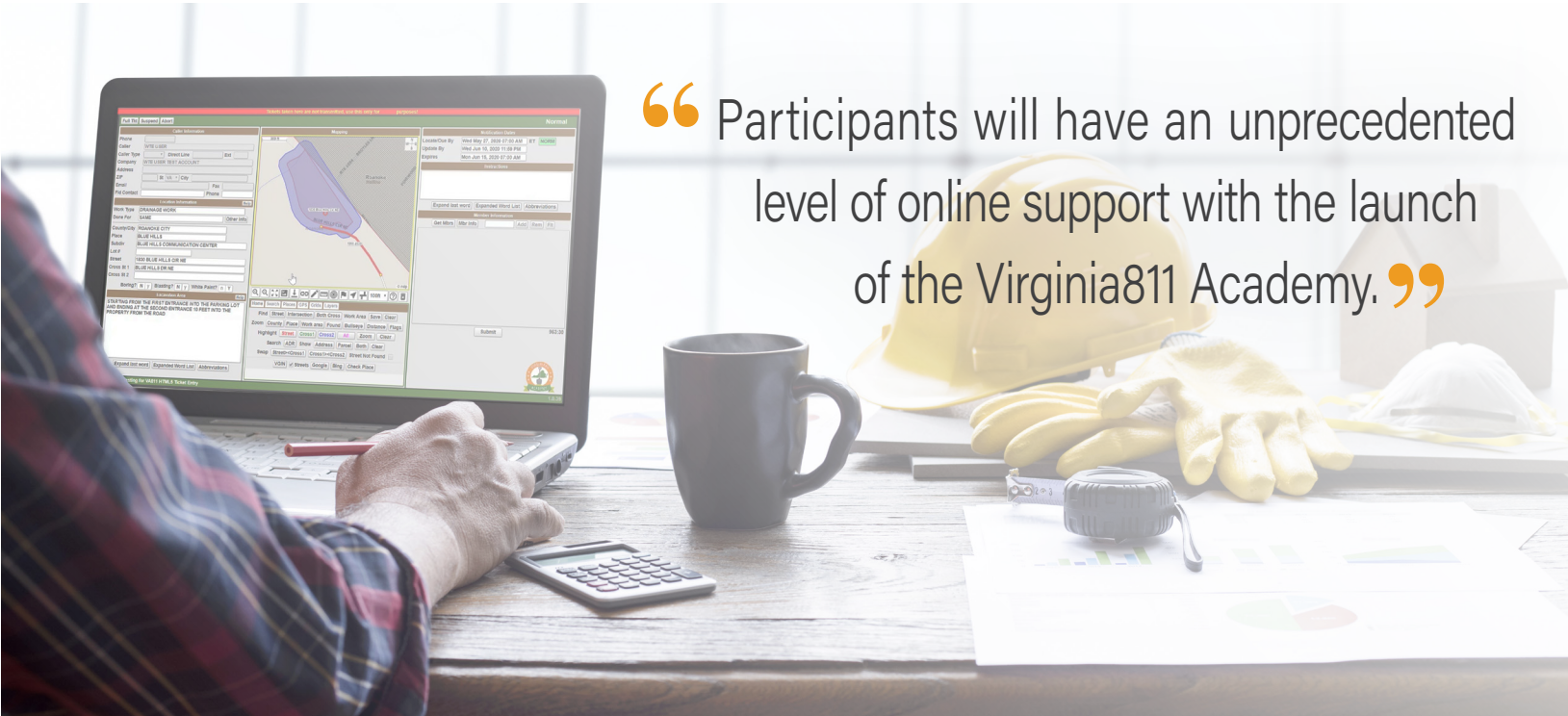
"Participants will have an unprecedented level of online support with the launch of the Virginia811 Academy. Virginia811's web ticket entry platform is a resource for accurate location requests for dig sites throughout Virginia," explains Scott Crawford, President & CEO of Virginia811. "We're excited to leverage online learning platforms and options to better engage our stakeholders and continue protecting underground utilities, property and life throughout the Commonwealth."

The recent Pandemic reminds us of the value of web-based technologies. COVID-19 undermined in-person instruction and training, yet Virginia811 video conferencing continued to offer WTE training opportunities. Similarly, The Virginia811 Academy will capitalize on this kind of training under the direction of

our Professional Development Specialist, Susan Painter. She promises to lead a robust learning experience for participants. "Teaching ticket entry for over 18 years has taught me that folks learn best when they are in a comfortable environment and can choose the learning method that best suits their learning style," says Painter. "We're excited that Virginia811 Academy offers three methods of learning so that everyone who wants to process their own tickets can learn to do so at their own pace and on their own schedule."



Painter, and several other Virginia811 team members, are currently putting the final touches on the Academy site. The site is expected to be completed by mid-December and users will sign up for training at Academy.VA811.com.



“Participants will have an unprecedented level of online support with the launch of the Virginia811 Academy.”



# VIRGINIA811 PARTNERS WITH DHS & CISA TO IMPROVE NETWORK SECURITY

## A Road Map for Continuous Improvement

Virginia811 is working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to conduct 3 types of penetration/security testing. Through the Cybersecurity and Information Security Agency (CISA), Virginia811 was able to obtain the following types of services:



1) **Cyber Hygiene Scanning (CHS)** Regular network scans focus on continuously reviewing internet-accessible systems for known vulnerabilities to help secure networks against weak configurations. Once initiated, this service is mostly automated.

a) **Virginia811** began receiving weekly vulnerability reports. As potential issues are identified, CISA notifies **Virginia811** so they can mitigate risks prior to exploitation. The service incentivizes modern security practices and enables **Virginia811** to reduce their exposure to exploitable vulnerabilities, which decreases stakeholder risk, while increasing overall resiliency. After the initial assessment, CISA provides:

- (1) Enhanced scans and provides special reports on risks as they are identified.
- (2) Engineering support as needed.

b) Scanning occurs continuously between each weekly report.

2) **Phishing Campaign Assessment (PCA)** measures **Virginia811** propensity to click on email phishing lures. Phishing is commonly used to breach an organization's network. The assessment occurs over a 6-week period, and the results can be used to provide guidance for anti-phishing training and awareness.

3) **Remote Penetration Testing (RPT)** uses a dedicated remote team to assess, identify, and mitigate vulnerabilities to exploitable pathways. RPT focuses entirely on externally accessible systems and may include methodologies such as scenario-based external network penetration testing, external web application testing and phishing campaign assessments (PCA). After completing an RPT, a final report is generated that includes business executive recommendations, specific findings and potential mitigations, as well as technical attack path details. An optional debriefing presentation summarizing preliminary findings and observations is also available.

In addition to mitigating risks with the hygiene scans, the phishing campaigns and the remote penetration testing, **Virginia811** will participate in a Cyber Resilience Review (CRR) with the DHS/CISA team. Through the CRR, the organization will develop an understanding of its operational resilience and ability to manage cyber risk during normal operations and times of operational stress and crisis. At the end of the assessment, **Virginia811** will receive a report from the DHS which will be used to create a **Virginia811** Cybersecurity Plan and a road map for continuous improvement in cybersecurity.

## ELECTION DAY HEIGHTENED AWARENESS PROGRAM

### Encouraging Excavators Working Near Polling Stations to Dig with CARE



COVID-19 didn't stop a number of traditions from occurring – beautiful fall scenery, football season, the a Series, and the Virginia Election Day Heightened Awareness Program (EDHAP).

#### What is EDHAP?

It's a damage prevention public awareness campaign created in 2012 by Virginia stakeholders. Virginia was a "swing-state" during that election, and stakeholders wanted to make sure that Virginians had the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. So, the program was created to encourage excavators working near polling stations to Dig with CARE so as to not disrupt voting. We wanted Virginia to be in the news for how the vote played out, not because voting was disrupted due to damaged utilities.

Election Day every year is important, as a result, EDHAP has become a staple of public awareness in Virginia ever since.

**Virginia811** partnered again this year with **Dominion Energy** in conducting the campaign. Marcy Carroll and Steve Light of **Virginia811** met with Dominion's Andy Brooks in October to discuss this year's edition of the program.

- Dominion Energy would provide lat/long coordinates for all polling stations in the Dominion service territory
- **Virginia811** would run a query of tickets that would be active on Election Day (November 3) within a 2,500 foot radius of the polling station coordinates
- Steve Light and Andy Brooks drafted a statement to be shared with the contacts on the tickets
- **Virginia811**'s Natalie Soucie agreed to create a recording of the statement to be shared
- Andy Brooks worked with Dominion staff to use their automated call system and delivered voice messages to the ticket contacts on November 2nd and 3rd.

Callouts were made on November 2 and November 3, with over 5,300 calls done each day. Over 90% of the calls were either answered or reached an answering machine each day.

This is the message that was delivered:

### NOVEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> IS ELECTION DAY

You are performing excavation or demolition activity near a voting location in your area. Damage Prevention stakeholders in Virginia would like to remind you to Dig with CARE every day, but especially on November 3rd.

Thank you for your commitment to Underground Utility Damage Prevention.

Thanks to Dominion Energy for their help, and we applaud the excavating community for making sure that the voting process in Virginia was not disrupted!





## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

# Kenny Spade

## New Role As Manager Of Data Analytics And QA/QC With A Focus On Data And The Use Of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We're happy to announce that former Operations and Quality Assurance and Analytics Supervisor, **Kenny Spade** has been promoted to a new position as Manager of Data Analytics and QA/QC.

In Kenny's new role, he'll continue to lead the QA/QC Team and contribute to **Virginia811**'s strategic decisions. He'll also identify grants that fund future AI technology, as well as other advanced technologies impacting ticket entry and auditing. In addition, Kenny will oversee the implementation of projects related to AI and other technologies. This involves coordinating efforts to maintain, evaluate, continually test, and facilitate updating AI technologies, starting with our AI WTE auditing model. On the side, Kenny has been working hard toward

earning his bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems & Business Analytics from Colorado State University - Global (to be completed Summer 2021) while working full-time at **Virginia811**. He's already been able to apply what he's learned at school to his work at **Virginia811**. Between improving internal processes and effectively overseeing the development and successful testing of artificial intelligence in our WTE auditing, Kenny's education is paying off!

Kenny worked with Dr. Jen Van Mullekom at Virginia Tech (VT) and statisticians from the Virginia Tech (VT) Statistical Applications and Innovations Group (SAIG) as part of our 2020 PHMSA Grant. He provided the support needed to analyze roughly 1.3 million web tickets and developed an algorithm that assigns a level of risk to WTE tickets. While developing the algorithm, Kenny and the group tested the model and the results are impressive. We can now identify over two times the WTE tickets with Safety Levels compared to the previous model.

Congratulations on your new role Kenny!

“ Kenny understands data and gives it meaning by using innovative strategies to interpret, test and update Virginia811 technologies. ”

## CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE

### Team Members Celebrating Work Anniversaries



Scott Crawford  
4 Years



Shannon Bishop  
6 Years



Kayla DeHart  
6 Years



Devian Trevey-Boitnott  
3 Years

We love celebrating work anniversaries and fourth quarter is full of them! For starters, how about our fearless leader, President and CEO - **Scott Crawford**! He's been with **Virginia811** since 12/19/2016. Thank you, Scott, for your outstanding service and leadership. You're a role model to all **Virginia811** employees.

**Shannon Bishop** and **Kayla DeHart** just celebrated six years of service! And **Devian Trevey-Boitnott** is about to celebrate three years at **Virginia811**. Congratulations ladies and thank you for your hard work and dedication to **Virginia811**!

With over 19 years of combined experience to **Virginia811**, we want to **THANK EACH OF YOU** for your faithful service!

## Virginia811 Wellness

### New Committee Members + New Initiatives



During the third quarter of 2020 **Virginia811**'s Wellness Committee gained two new members! Welcome Connesha Waterfield and Taylor Ellison!

Several new initiatives were announced in the third and fourth quarter of this year including EAP mental health awareness reminders, a **Virginia811** Day challenge with awards, a fall virtual scavenger hunt, a BOCO Fit Rage Program, and a paid virtual Drumstick Dash registration.

A new wellness application called IncentFit also recently launched! Employees are eligible for up to \$300 per year in rewards for exercising and living a healthy lifestyle. Employees are rewarded for activities such as attending fitness facilities, walking, running, bicycling, participating in races, webinars and more. Rewards can be automatically deposited to bank accounts, donated to charity or used in the merchandise mall.





# Virginia811 Display Truck Back on the Road

## Truck Tour Launches on Social Media



The **Virginia811** Display Truck is back and looking better than ever. This summer the truck was shipped to Las Vegas where it received significant upgrades including a new Windows 10 computer, new programs, and new and improved video display panels. Even though the truck can't go to go to public events or tailgating events this year because of the Pandemic, the Marketing team launched a creative way to promote the Truck in a safe way and engage our followers using social media.

In October, **Virginia811** launched a new campaign on Facebook and Instagram called the **Virginia811** Truck Tour. Here's how the contest works. Each Monday the Truck heads to a new location and a clue is posted on social media inviting followers to guess the location. Followers post their locations guesses by commenting on social media and a winner is randomly selected on Thursdays. Each week the winner is announced on social media and given a Prize Pack.

The contest highlights a new theme each month. In October, the Truck toured the state for the scariest places in Virginia. Clues were posted and followers then guessed the haunted locations. Relevant hashtags like **#VA811TruckTour** were used to help promote the campaign. We announced the winners on social media while reminding followers that

nothing is scarier than hitting a utility line. There were 4 winners who received a **Virginia811** Swag Bag. Several winners shared photos of themselves with the swag and these were posted on social media.

Diggin' in at the Drive-in was the theme for November. Our Truck headed out to classic drive-in diners in Virginia that are known for their nostalgic take-out friendly eats. Winner received a gift card to their own favorite eatery. Again, all the



November clues and winners were highlighted on social media.

The Display Truck is headed out to some of the most festive holiday places in Virginia in December! Stay tuned for locations!

We encourage you to play along for your chance to win a **Virginia811** Prize Pack. How can you play? How can you increase your chances of winning? It's easy! **FOLLOW US** on Facebook and Instagram and then start to play along by posting your guesses for your chance to win. Bottom line, it's not too late to start following **Virginia811** on social media and win a Prize Pack in December.



### FOLLOW US



**THOMAS MOHR**  
Virginia811 FB Follower  
& Contest Rock Star

MEMBER: City of Newport News



# Golden Shovel Award Winner

## Rob Hogan - Virginia811's IT Whisperer



Congratulations Rob Hogan... recipient of the Third Quarter 2020 Golden Shovel Award. Winners are nominated by **Virginia811** team members based on job performance and an overall willingness to go above and beyond in everything they do. Since 2002, Rob has worked at **Virginia811** as a **Senior Systems Administrator** in the IT department. That's 18 years of hard work and dedication to **Virginia811**. With team members working remotely now, the IT department is more important than ever. Rob is always just a phone call away and he's truly become our go-to person for any issues relating to IT. Way to go Rob!

One of our team members said it best about Rob: "When you have the occasion to work with Rob one-on-one, he's always respectful and he tries to help you understand what he's doing and why. He's considerate of our time and schedules updates based on our timeline needs rather than his own. Rob doesn't hesitate to stop what he is doing to help. He's greatly respected and appreciated by all."

“ Rob is our silent warrior and though we may not always realize it, he is out there making sure that everything runs smoothly. ”

Thanks to Rob for all he does to keep **Virginia811**'s IT department running smoothly! He's always there when we need him and we're so grateful that he keeps our systems up and running and meets our individual needs whenever obstacles come along.

## REMOTE DIGS

Remote work has suddenly become the new normal for us. As a **Virginia811** employee, we're here to support you in creating work spaces that meet your needs by helping you stay comfortable, organized, and improve your productivity.

If you plan to purchase an office chair or desk through our **Virginia811** assistance program, please contact **Dorothy Smith** for help by Thursday, December 31st.



