



The Virginia 811 Dirt

WORKING AS ONE TO GET THE JOB DONE



VIRGINIA 811'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

- Letter from the CEO 2
- JSON and Electronic White Lining 3
- Recognizing Amanda Cottrell 4
- Virginia 811 Scholarship Recipient..... 4
- 811 Fast Facts 4
- Golden Shovel Award 5
- Team Anniversaries 5
- New Virginia 811 Careers Page 5
- Welcome Brandon Massenburg 6
- 2025 Paradigm Meeting Schedule 6
- VUSC Sponsorship Opportunities 6
- 811 Day 2025 7
- Balancing Transparency and Safety 8
- Book Review of *First Entrepreneur* 9



LETTER FROM THE CEO

B. Scott Crawford

On June 27, 2025, after 23 years in operation, almost to the day, Virginia 811 went through a substantive change. As I think all stakeholders know, on that day Virginia 811 switched to a new center software operating platform: Irth Exactix.

Overall, the conversion went incredibly smoothly. There were a total of two blips, beyond Virginia 811’s control, in the first week resulting in a total of roughly 2.5 hours of reverting to the use of a “sandbox” to process locate requests; outside of those blips, the center remained fully operational within normal operating processes. On a positive note, these occurrences demonstrated disaster recovery plans worked in a real environment!

The largest learning curve, overall, for stakeholders has been the movement away from open locate request search to account-based search functionality. The process to get stakeholders set up correctly in the system has been nothing short of Herculean, but progress has definitively been made. Those set up correctly are finding more search and visibility functionality within this new platform than the previous. The mobile friendly platform removes the need to download an additional mobile app, so ERMA is no more, making the system more user friendly. All functions tied to ERMA have been migrated to the new mobile friendly platform.

A lingering issue, however, is allowing general contractors to have visibility over the locate requests of subcontractors. With an account-based system, contractors and members can only see locate requests tied to their respective companies. Virginia 811 recognizes the challenges with this limitation. As of this writing, Virginia 811 is working on several options to help contractors and members work with subcontractors to have easier locate request visibility. This information is being produced in an engaging graphic format and will be made available through the Virginia 811 Exactix Resource Hub and other distribution channels.

Electronic White Lining (EWL) was also implemented for web users with the launch of Exactix. Roughly 23% of WTE locate requests have utilized EWL, which is quite strong. However, there have been some concerns about the quality of these locate requests, leading Virginia 811 to recognize that WTE users need to be trained on when and how to most effectively use this EWL functionality. As such, Virginia 811 is creating online training content related to EWL for WTE users to complete. EWL will be a permissions-based feature and require a WTE user to successfully complete the EWL training before having access to this feature. It is hoped that this will improve the quality of EWL locate requests and help locators streamline locates and realize efficiencies.

Finally, as anticipated, and as anyone calling into Virginia 811 may attest, the wait time has been longer due to the conversion. As some WTE users adjust to learning the new platform, and resort back to calling in locate requests, and as a myriad of calls have come into the center related to locate request search questions and account questions, Virginia 811 has witnessed a dramatic rise in call volume. Comparing June and July, pre and post conversion, Virginia 811 experienced a 30% increase in calls, equalizing just over 9,100 additional calls in all. Evidence suggests calls are decreasing toward expected rates, but overall call volume is still high.

This has truly been an exciting time for Virginia 811. I am proud of everyone involved in the conversion who made this a smooth and successful project. I also want to thank all stakeholders for their patience and support as they learn this new operating system. Thank you!

B. Scott Crawford
President & CEO
Virginia 811

A Smarter Path Forward: JSON and Electronic White Lining

- B. Scott Crawford

Electronic white lining (EWL) offers Virginia an excellent means to find efficiencies to help locators review more detailed, visual-based, descriptions of excavation areas. In certain, maybe even most, cases, a visual representation of an excavation area can be more myopic – more focused – and help locators save time at a site, thus allowing them to respond to more locate requests! This is a win-win for all concerned, and it is something Virginia 811 entirely embraces and supports!

Prior to the conversion to the Irth Exactix center software solution, the platform that allows web users to use EWL on locate requests, the Virginia State Corporation Commission's Division of Utility and Railroad Safety worked with Virginia 811 and stakeholders to establish the infrastructure needed to allow EWL. New Rules for Enforcement were structured to protect locators as it was outlined that EWL supersedes text-based descriptions of excavation areas. This means that, per the Rules, EWL must align with Virginia 811's EWL standards and if a locator marks utilities fully within the EWL outlined area, the locator has sufficiently responded to the locate request, even if a text-based description suggests a larger scope of excavation. This was a very important step to ensure that EWL could achieve the results desired – yet another strategy Virginia stakeholders have embraced to ensure excavation readiness when locate requests are due.

A recognized deficiency in this process, however, is related to the currently continued use of email delivery of locate requests to members and locators. Email delivery prevents the actual image of the EWL to transmit directly to the locator. The image is only available to the locator if the locator logs into the Exactix account and reviews mapping. EWL is available, just not as easily as it could be. Due to this, anecdotal evidence suggests locators have not been as likely to use EWL as they might otherwise have been, and the data is not as positive in regard to EWL efficiencies as originally desired.

The first dataset used to analyze EWL, covering the first month of its use, suggests that EWL locate requests are slightly more likely to result

in non-responses (no-shows) and/or codes not allowing excavators to dig on time than non-EWL locate requests. Non-responses for locate requests occurred at a rate 34% higher than non-EWL locate requests. In relation to the use of Code 60, EWL locate requests had 29% higher use of the code than non-EWL locate requests. Similarly, Codes 91, 93, and 94 on EWL locate requests had higher rates per 1,000 requests than non-EWL locate requests. While counter-intuitive, this dataset suggests some process changes are needed to best utilize EWL.

First, auditing has revealed that EWL locate requests are having issues related to overall locate request quality. Within this particular dataset, roughly 43% of EWL locate requests have been audited by humans (100% of EWL locate requests are audited by AI). Of the locate requests audited, around 5% have resulted in an audit code necessitating Virginia 811 reach out to the excavator and take action to correct the locate request or make it clearer. Currently, Virginia 811 is creating online training content related to EWL. EWL is going to become a permission-based function. Web users will be required to complete online EWL training before being allowed to use EWL. This will help to ensure that web users are creating EWL locate requests better aligned with Virginia 811's EWL standards and that will help locators have a better quality locate request with which to work.

Second, Virginia 811 is currently working on transitioning from an email locate request delivery process to a JSON, web-based delivery process. This will allow EWL images to be able to be directly viewed by the locator within the locate request rather than having to log in to the Exactix platform. This will make EWL images more accessible to locators. With this ease of accessibility to EWL defined scope of work, locators will be able to better utilize this feature as they locate utilities at excavation sites.

Virginia 811 is excited about EWL and how it will positively impact excavation readiness. It is committed to finding ways to improve efficiencies and ensure this new feature is as effective as it can be!



Recognizing Amanda Cottrell

From Operations Supervisor to Assistant Manager of Operations



We are proud to announce that Amanda Cottrell has been promoted to Assistant Manager of Operations at Virginia 811. This promotion reflects not only Amanda’s exceptional leadership during our recent software conversion but also her continued dedication to supporting our Operations Team

Throughout the conversion project, Amanda went above and beyond to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. She developed comprehensive lesson plans and new documentation, including quick reference guides, to help every team member feel confident navigating the new platform.

Her efforts didn’t stop there - Amanda offered follow-up training sessions, many outside of regular business hours, ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to learn and succeed at their own pace. By fostering a culture of preparation, patience, and teamwork, she helped make the transition as smooth and successful as possible.

In her new role as Assistant Manager of Operations, Amanda will continue to support the Manager of Operations and the team by focusing on enhancing processes, strengthening team collaboration, training efforts, and maximizing the efficiency of our new systems.

Please join us in congratulating Amanda Cottrell on this exciting and well-earned achievement. We look forward to seeing her continued positive impact in this leadership role.

Congratulations, Amanda!

Investing in the Future

Owen Sexton Receives 2025 Virginia 811 Scholarship

Virginia 811 is proud to announce **Owen Sexton** as the recipient of this year’s scholarship award. A recent graduate of Monticello High School, Owen is a standout student-athlete and community volunteer. He was a five-year member of the cross country, indoor track, and baseball teams, serving as team captain in both cross country and indoor track, and earning a Team Leadership Award during his junior year.

Owen’s dedication goes beyond athletics. He has volunteered at local races like the Charlottesville 10 Miler and Women’s Four Miler, and supported therapy dog classes at Green Dogs Unleashed. He also works at Carter Mountain Orchard, where he balances retail duties and kitchen responsibilities.

This fall, Owen will attend Radford University as part of the Honors College, majoring in Physics with a minor in Environmental Science. He plans to pursue a master’s in Environmental Engineering and is already thinking about how utility protection will play a vital role in his future work—whether designing water infrastructure, leading construction projects, or restoring ecosystems. His thoughtful understanding of damage prevention aligns perfectly with Virginia 811’s mission.

We’re excited to support Owen on his path and look forward to seeing the positive impact he will make in the field of environmental engineering.



811
FAST
FACTS

CHANNEL	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
PHONE	357,414	32.35%
WTE	747,349	67.65%

Total YTD 2025
1,104,763



Recognizing Excellence The Virginia 811 Golden Shovel Award

MARCY CARROLL

Golden Shovel Award 2nd Quarter 2025

Virginia 811 is proud to recognize **Marcy Carroll, GIS, IT, & Vendor Specialist**, as our Golden Shovel Award winner for this quarter! Marcy holds the distinction of being the very first Damage Prevention Specialist (DPS), beginning her career with Virginia 811 during our inaugural training class on April 8, 2002. Over the years, she has exemplified the qualities and values that make a meaningful impact on our organization and the stakeholders we serve.

Marcy's nomination highlights her pivotal role in the recent Exactix conversion. Serving as the testing lead, she ensured all findings were carefully verified and resolved, while providing support across departments and stepping in wherever issues arose. Her dedication was particularly remarkable during the Fourth of July holiday weekend, when she worked tirelessly with the QA/QC team on account creation and linkage. Teams across the organization noted that her attention to detail, commitment to accuracy, and willingness to go above and beyond directly contributed to the project's success.

Through these efforts, Marcy exemplifies the qualities Virginia 811 values most: collaboration across teams, dedication to quality and accuracy, and a steadfast focus on supporting stakeholders and improving processes.

Congratulations to Marcy for this well-deserved recognition! Her commitment, expertise, and teamwork continue to set the standard for excellence at Virginia 811.



“ Marcy played a pivotal role in the Exactix conversion, going above and beyond to support every team—her dedication and teamwork were invaluable, making a direct impact across multiple areas. ”

Thank you for your 23 years of dedication.

CONGRATULATIONS MARCY!



Team Members Celebrating Their Service to Virginia 811 This Quarter

Marty Mitchem

7/13/2002 | 23 Years of Service

Garry Finley

9/29/2004 | 21 Years of Service

Amanda Cottrell

8/11/2017 | 8 Years of Service

Jerry Altice

7/29/2019 | 6 Years of Service

Chuck Emerson

7/29/2019 | 6 Years of Service

Fernando Mendez

9/2/2020 | 5 Years of Service

Kimberly Swope

9/8/2020 | 5 Years of Service

Shana Linthicum

7/14/2021 | 4 Years of Service

Krystin Fahnley

7/1/2024 | 1 Year of Service

Roy Lax

7/1/2024 | 1 Year of Service

Mark Mullins

7/1/2024 | 1 Year of Service

Cera Wadsworth

7/1/2024 | 1 Year of Service

Kip Burlew

8/26/2024 | 1 Year of Service

83 Years of Combined Virginia 811 Experience

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE



DIG INTO A CAREER THAT MATTERS

Join a team that protects communities and keeps digging safe.

Looking for a meaningful career that protects lives, property, and the communities we live in? At Virginia 811, we do more than handle locate requests - we serve as the critical link that keeps digging projects safe and utilities protected.

Visit our new **Careers** page to see how you can be part of this important mission.



VISIT:

VA811.com/Virginia-811-Careers/

Welcome Brandon Massenburg

Virginia 811 is excited to introduce **Brandon Massenburg** as our new **Public Awareness Liaison | Eastern Region**. Brandon brings an extensive background in customer service and entrepreneurship, with more than a decade of successful business development and growth that position him to effectively promote safety and damage prevention.

A graduate of Virginia State University, Brandon is also an active leader in his community. He currently serves on the Prince George Economic Development Authority Board and is a member of the Capitol Region Military Alliance of Virginia as well as the Hopewell-Prince George Chamber of Commerce.

Please join us in welcoming Brandon to Virginia 811—we are excited to see the positive impact he will bring in promoting safety, building relationships, and supporting damage prevention across the Eastern Region.



Brandon Massenburg
Public Awareness Liaison | Eastern Region | VA811
Cell: 804-586-6231 | Email: BMassenburg@VA811.com



Registration Now Open

Upcoming Virginia Pipeline Awareness Meetings

Paradigm
Liaison Services



CORE-EX
COORDINATED RESPONSE & EXCAVATOR EXERCISE



EXCAVATOR
PIPELINE SAFETY PROGRAM

CoRE-EX and Excavator Programs

Hosted by local pipeline and gas distribution companies, these programs address critical damage prevention initiatives specific to excavators. Investing time in either training is the best way to learn current safe digging practices.

VIRGINIA BEACH September 8, 2025 5:30 PM	MANASSAS September 18, 2025 11:00 AM	SOUTH BOSTON October 2, 2025 5:30 PM	LEBANON October 15, 2025 5:30 PM
SMITHFIELD September 9, 2025 11:00 AM	CULPEPER September 23, 2025 5:30 PM	MARTINSVILLE October 7, 2025 5:30 PM	ABINGDON October 16, 2025 7:30 AM
EMPORIA September 10, 2025 5:30 PM	RUCKERSVILLE September 24, 2025 5:30 PM	ROANOKE October 8, 2025 11:00 AM	ABINGDON October 16, 2025 5:30 PM
COLONIAL HEIGHTS September 15, 2025 5:30 PM	HARRISONBURG September 25, 2025 5:30 PM	BLACKSBURG October 9, 2025 7:30 AM	
SANDSTON September 16, 2025 11:00 AM	PALMYRA September 30, 2025 5:30 PM	BLACKSBURG October 9, 2025 5:30 PM	
FREDERICKSBURG September 17, 2025 11:00 AM	LYNCHBURG October 1, 2025 5:30 PM	NORTON October 14, 2025 5:30 PM	

For registration details and general information,
please visit: [VA811.com/events](https://va811.com/events)



VUSC
VIRGINIA UTILITY SAFETY CONFERENCE

Sponsorship Opportunities Still Available

The Virginia Underground Safety Conference is right around the corner—and there’s still time to showcase your support for the industry’s premier gathering of utility owners, excavators, locators, and leaders dedicated to protecting Virginia’s underground infrastructure.

By sponsoring, your brand will be front and center with the professionals driving safety, innovation, and collaboration across the state and beyond. Sponsorship not only boosts your visibility but also highlights your commitment to safeguarding lives, property, and essential services.

Availability is limited, so be sure to secure your sponsorship soon.

Learn more about sponsorship opportunities here:
[VA811.com/2025-Safety-Conference](https://va811.com/2025-Safety-Conference)



OCTOBER 28-30

Virginia Beach, VA



VUSC presented in partnership with:



va811.com
Dig With CARE



SCC
DIVISION OF UTILITY
& RAILROAD SAFETY
STATE CORPORATION
COMMISSION

Virginia 811 Celebrates 811 Day 2025 with Statewide Outreach


Virginia 811 once again embraced the spirit of **811 Day**, celebrating throughout August with events and partnerships that amplified the safe digging message across the Commonwealth. From baseball stadiums to community festivals, display truck stops, and field visits, our team worked to engage Virginians in fun, memorable ways while reinforcing the importance of contacting Virginia 811 before any digging project.

For the fourth consecutive year, Virginia 811 teamed up with Papa John's Pizza and Virginia Natural Gas to spread the word. Papa John's offered a 25% discount on all online orders at 27 Hampton Roads locations using the promo code **811DEAL**, while more than 50,000 pizza boxes carried messaging promoting 811 Day, Virginia 811, and the importance of safe digging.

One of the highlights of 811 Day week was the Public Awareness & Training (PAT) team's surprise worksite visits across Virginia. Crews were treated to hot Papa John's pizza, cold drinks, and Virginia 811 swag as a gesture of appreciation for their commitment to safety and protecting underground utilities.

The 2025 campaign continued to build on a strong tradition of outreach, reaching thousands of Virginians and strengthening awareness of safe digging practices across the state.





Balancing Transparency and Safety: Should Locate Request Data Be Public?

- By ChatGPT

The following essay was entirely written by ChatGPT+, an AI Natural Language Generator available through Open AI. The prompt to which ChatGPT+ responded was *"In a 500 word essay based on your understanding of the 811 process and locate requests, would you recommend for an 811 center to allow the general public full access to all locate requests or would you recommend this access be restricted through an account based process?"*

As underground utility protection continues to evolve in complexity and urgency, so too must the systems that support safe excavation practices. One topic increasingly under discussion among 811 centers and industry stakeholders is whether the public should be granted unrestricted access to all locate requests submitted through the system. While transparency is a core value in public service, the safety, privacy, and operational integrity of the 811 process must take priority. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that access to locate requests be managed through an account-based system rather than made available to the general public without restriction.

Locate requests contain detailed information about excavation sites, including precise geolocations, time frames, contact information, and often details about the type of work being performed. When this data is available without authentication or oversight, it poses a number of risks—chief among them, the potential exposure of sensitive information. Whether it's a planned excavation near a critical water main or utility work close to a power grid, this data, if accessed or shared irresponsibly, can be exploited by malicious actors or cause undue concern among property owners.

Another major consideration is the increasing emphasis on protecting critical infrastructure. At a time when cyber and physical threats to public utilities are top-of-mind for federal and state agencies, allowing open access to data tied to utility locations could inadvertently weaken security postures. An account-based access system not only mitigates these risks but also introduces important safeguards by allowing access to be monitored, regulated, and—if necessary—revoked. It also ensures that those interacting with locate request data are individuals with a legitimate reason to do so, such as contractors, utility representatives, or government agencies.

From an operational standpoint, open access introduces challenges as well. Systems can become overloaded by non-essential queries or data scraping, affecting performance and slowing down service for the people who rely on it most—those actively planning and executing safe digs. Restricting access through user accounts allows centers to better manage system performance, ensure uptime, and prioritize excavators and utility operators.

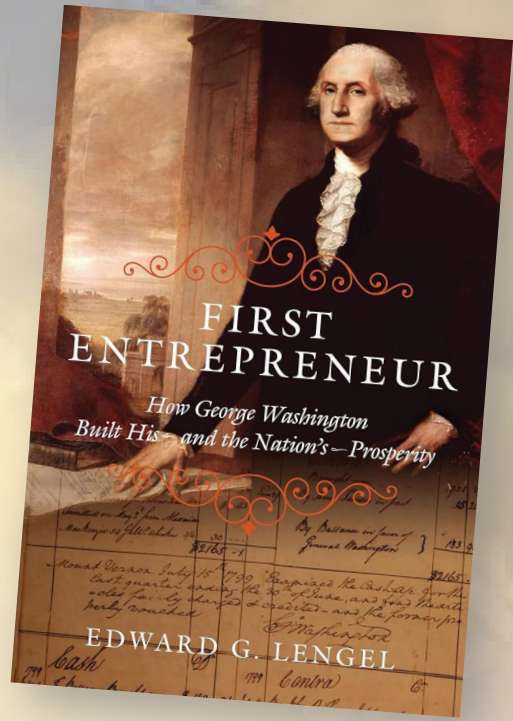
Some may argue that limiting access stifles transparency, but that need not be the case. 811 centers can still meet public accountability goals by offering aggregate or redacted data to the public through dashboards or reports that showcase volume, locate request types, and general trends—without revealing sensitive information. Such solutions maintain the integrity of the system while meeting transparency expectations.

In conclusion, allowing public access to locate requests without restrictions may seem like a step toward openness, but it risks compromising privacy, safety, and system reliability. By adopting an account-based access model, 811 centers can better protect sensitive information, uphold infrastructure security, ensure operational efficiency, and still deliver meaningful transparency to the public. It is a balanced, forward-thinking approach that keeps the core mission of 811—damage prevention and public safety—at the forefront.

Open Data and the Protection of the Underground
Utility Infrastructure, Image, Style of Oil on Canvas,
ChatGPT+ and B. Scott Crawford, 2025

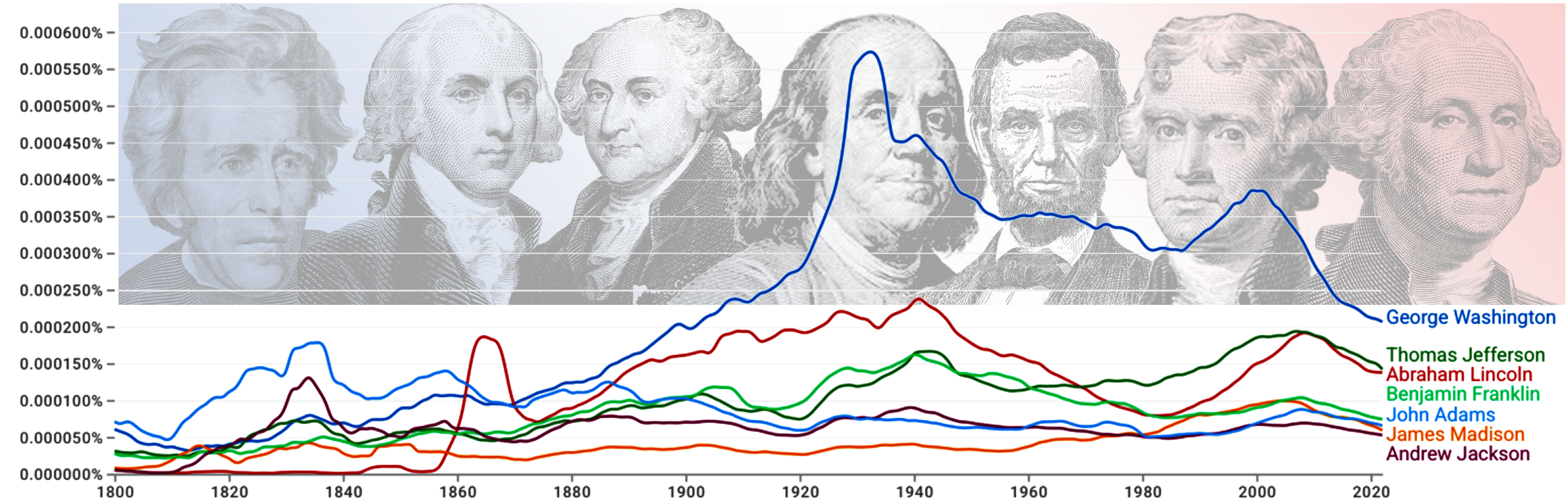
A FOUNDING ENTREPRENEUR

Book Review of *First Entrepreneur: How George Washington Built His – and the Nation’s – Prosperity*



- B. Scott Crawford

According to ChatGPT, George Washington is among the most written about historical figures in all of world history. Supporting this observation is the work of J. Warren Wallace, a CIA analyst, who has explored the frequency of publications related to notable figures. In 2020, his analysis suggests that while Jesus Christ is the most written about figure in history, George Washington is second! A pivotal and important Founding Father has had more publications tied to him than anyone in all of world history excepting Jesus. Using Google NGRAM and comparing George Washington to several notable American Founding Fathers and Presidents, it becomes clear that Wallace’s assertions about the popularity of Washington may be accurate.



With so much written about Washington, it is refreshing when a unique perspective emerges in relation to his character, military career, and presidency. Edward G. Lengel, professor of history at the University of Virginia, is able to offer readers this perspective as he views Washington through his financial papers in his work *First Entrepreneur*. Approaching Washington as an entrepreneur and businessman, exploring how his experiences overseeing a large agrarian economic project within a mercantile economic environment, provides a new lens through which to view this iconic Founding Father. Lengel argues that Washington’s business experiences, and entrepreneurial endeavors, helped define him as both a military leader and political figure. As Lengel notes, “His [Washington] personal experiences and abilities as an entrepreneur inspired his policies both as general and as president.” In particular, experiences Washington had running his plantation,

his primary business, taught him to be mindful of finding efficiencies, diversifying revenue streams, and avoiding excessive debt. All of these lessons carried over to his roles as commanding general of the Continental, and then United States, Army and as President.

For example, Lengel points out that Washington operated the Continent Army in a similar manner to how he viewed Mount Vernon. Rather than the Revolution being a military struggle between colonists and Britain, he approached the conflict as an economic struggle. To Washington, the emerging nation’s economic health translated to military success – if the emerging nation found economic strength, that would translate to military strength and success. This view drove Washington’s overall strategic vision throughout the war, leading him to create an army that was self-sufficient, and that created a strategic dilemma for the British as they were forced to purchase supplies from the local population at incredibly high prices, resulting in placing economic pressure on Britain forcing the British to evaluate the return on investment in retaining possession of the colonies, or forcing the British military to confiscate supplies and turn even more of the population toward the Patriot cause. In a similar spirit, he recognized that the war of public opinion would restrict him from confiscating supplies, leading him to pursue a general policy of not confiscating supplies but reimbursing owners for the materials procured.

Overall, within Washington’s role as military leader and president, Lengel suggests business experiences shaped his understanding of his roles and how he approached these roles. Within these experiences, modern business leaders can learn much. To Washington, in Lengel’s words, “it was the people – men and women, rich and poor, enslaved and free – who created wealth. His job was to free them to do the real work.” Washington understood that in business, military matters, and even as president his role was to create an environment where all people could thrive. Of course, with slavery being a part of that equation, no, not all people could fully thrive, but that is where Washington was a product of his age – and even within that culture he wanted slavery to in some way end. Washington also recognized that efficiency in business, diversification, and avoiding debt were essential to sustainable, long term growth. All these are viable and relevant business practices, whether in the 18th or even 21st centuries. At the national level, Washington sought to, as president, avoid war and support national unity – as his Farewell Address suggests, factionalism and sectional strife were to be avoided! Finally, Washington recognized that transparency is essential. His actions could always come under scrutiny, so he strove to keep accurate records of all expenses, ensuring expenses were legitimate and justified.

Lengel provides a fresh look at Washington’s rich public career. Those in business interested in history and America’s founding will find an engaging overview of Washington’s experiences as businessman, military leader, and president. However, those in business today will also find some interesting and thoughtful insights into business leadership applicable to contemporary business challenges.



Passion to Serve,
Dedication to Safety.