

On The Mark Utility Locating  
Services, Inc.

5/19/2020

Edition 1, Volume 17



**Congratulations to Lisa O’Neal, Julie Varela, and Adam Banks!** All three have achieved their 5<sup>th</sup> Year Work Anniversaries with On The Mark. Given that OTM has only been in existence for 9 years, 5 years is impressive in that it is over half the life of the company.

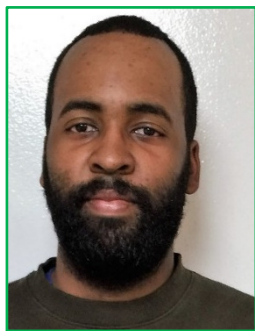
Lisa was the first OTM employee hired, followed by Julie, and then Adam. All three believed in our vision. They have worked tirelessly to see it become a reality. They have stayed the course. All three have made significant contributions to the OTM that we all know and love today.



**Lisa** started as a dispatcher for our first Damage Prevention Vehicle (DPV) program with Avangrid. This program had 9 drivers for both RG&E and NYSEG. Lisa help to make this program successful and by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the program, we were up to 15 drivers. She then helped to launch both DPV pilot programs with Orange & Rockland Utilities (ORU) and shortly thereafter with ConEdison. In 2019, the DPV ORU program transitioned from a pilot program to a multi-year contract and last month we were informed that the DPV-ConEd program will do similarly. Lisa has

led/managed all these programs which repeatedly exceed their annual 3<sup>rd</sup> party damage ratios goals. As she eclipsed her 5 years with OTM, she is now back to where she started and that is leading/managing the DPV Avangrid program but instead of 9 drivers, it is now 28 and will hopefully soon be 56! While most may not be aware of this, OTM is a national leader in the service of damage prevention vehicles. Lisa has spearheaded this work from our beginning to now. Great work, tireless commitment, and dedication. Thank you, Lisa!

**Julie** started as a part time employee doing some financial bookkeeping from home. After about a year or so, she came on board into a full-time position doing mostly financial work along with some HR items based on her formal education and prior work experience. Julie handled all our bookkeeping much of which is behind the scenes to most of you. This back-office work allows us to keep an accounting of the company's financials. We do thousands of transactions in terms of purchases and payments and until recently with both Michelle Bryant and Jackie Harrison, Julie did all this work. As she came on board, she started doing people work – job posting, on-boarding, performance management support, payroll, benefits, etc. As we grew, the need for support of this work also grew and it was a natural fit for Julie. She was then promoted into the position of HR Manager. When Julie started in this role unofficially, we had paper time sheets and we captured weekly data on excel spreadsheets. We had paper job applications. Now, 5 years later with Julie's leadership we are almost 100% digital in things like job postings, on-boarding, time reporting, performance management, etc. More important than the implementation of these electronic systems is Julie's work on organizational development including our culture. She has been a leader in employee recognition and celebrations. From simple e-birthday wishes with congratulatory cards and gift certificates to our annual picnic and Christmas celebrations. She is our Chief Fun Officer. So, if you think we have a good company culture, a family environment, please join me in thanking Julie for her tireless contributions in these areas.



Last but not least is **Adam**. Adam started as a Fire Hydrant Inspector. His work ethic and faithfulness led to him being promoted to inspector and then team lead of the program. At the end of this program, Adam left the company for a short period of time. However, when OTM subsequently secured the DPV program and needed good, solid, trustworthy employees that could self-manage, we thought of Adam. He rejoined the company as a DPV driver. Adam expressed interested in doing other things as the opportunities presented themselves and it did just that. A couple of years ago, Adam started training on doing private utility locating. He started with electric, cable/tv, etc. He did this intermittently along with DPV driving for about a year. Last year he transitioned full time into 811 One-Call locating for Empire Access and Southern Tier Network. He has also taken a leadership role in coaching & directing other employees who support these programs on-call schedule. Also, as needed, he supports Joe Villella and his team on private utility locating. So, as you can see Adam has become an OTM army swiss knife. He does fire hydrant inspections, DPV driving, one-call utility locating, and private utility locating.

All three of these team members are a shining example of good attitudes, great work ethic, being good team members, commitment, dedication, and the win-win of the employee-employer relationship. Great job team, congratulations on your 5 years with the company and we pray you have many, many more!

# WE MOVED!

400 Air Park Drive, Suite 30, Rochester, NY 14624



Back in 2016, OTM's office was located at **1250 Scottsville Rd., Suite 2**. This was our 1<sup>st</sup> physical office location. It was 750 sq. ft. It had a small entrance/lobby area where Lisa O'Neal sat, one closed office that Wayne Coleman occupied, a small conference room, a small open area that was shared by John Bryant, Julie Varela, Abby Means (a DPV dispatcher), sometimes Adam Banks, and one small bathroom shared by all. In just about 2 years we had outgrown this space and had no room for additional growth. Our lease was scheduled to renew in March 2017, so we started our search for a new location.

Rather than make a radical change in location, we started our search by looking at other properties in the area owned by the same landlord, Excel Hotel Management, LLC. One of the first locations we looked at was 400 Air Park Dr., Suite 30. Wayne and I walked the area and thought it was really nice but far, far too large for us. We looked at several other locations and found nothing. A little time past and as Wayne continued to work on a new location,

he became aware of **1280 Scottsville Rd, Suite 60**. On a good weather day, we walked to this office area and we walked through it. Our collectively thought was it too was a little large (at 3,579 sq. ft.) but not as much as other areas and we could make it work. It would for sure give us opportunity to grow over the coming years. On March 2017 we moved in.

As God has continued to bless OTM and as we have continued to grow, our need for more office space has also grown. Last year in October/November, as we anticipated our lease renewal in March 2020 and again Wayne led the process of looking for a new location. And wouldn't you know, we revisited **400 Air Park Dr., Suite 30** and this time, almost 3 years later, the space fit (at almost 5,000 sq. ft.). And as of May 2020, we have moved!

Please click on the following link to see some pics of the new office location ([New Location Pics](#)).

## Utility Surveying

Basic Radio Frequency (RF) technology and even Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology allows one to locate and mark, using paint and flags, underground utilities. Generally, this is for the purpose of excavation. **Utility Surveying** builds upon this by using high-tech equipment to obtain the GPS coordinates of located utilities.

First, utilities of interest at a site are located using RF and/or GPR technology. We then use a GPS device such as a Tremble or Geode (shown to the right) to obtain GPS coordinates at the flags indicating the location of the utilities. In addition to the latitude and longitude measurements, OTM obtains depth measurements to complete the surveying process. The resulting data can be plotted in CAD, GIS, or on a Google Earth map to visualize the information (see example below).



OTM is the first locating company Avangrid has utilized to create GPS coordinates with depth readings associated with the GPS flagged locations.



Hard Rd., Webster NY - Gas Main Locations

Once this service was presented to the Avangrid Engineering Groups, they realized the value in their future planning projects as well as being information that is often requested from municipalities, the Dept. of Transportation (DOT), and the City of Rochester.

OTM has currently completed three (3) projects, utilizing this equipment/service for Avangrid. They are incredibly pleased with the results and we expect to have many more upcoming projects for their Gas & Electric Divisions. This new service will also be presented and offered to other utility companies as well as utility contractors.



Below are some questions employees have asked and some may be thinking about?

### **Why has OTM suspended its Employee Referral Program?**

**Answer:** This program was put in place to facilitate the identification of good, qualified candidates that not only had the required skillset/experience but also that fit our culture. It was set up to be a win-win situation for both the employee and the employer. The employee gets \$500 and OTM gets high quality, skilled/experienced candidates that subsequently become part of the OTM family.

This program compliments all our efforts to market and recruit people talent but in the context of COVID-19 pandemic and the exploding amount of good, qualified, job candidates that are readily available for employment, this program adds little incremental value to our recruitment efforts. Last week, the federal government announced that unemployment was 14.7%. The real unemployment rate includes the underemployed, the marginally attached, and discouraged workers. This rate is about 20%. Economists are forecasting that next month unemployment could exceed 25% and the real unemployment could approach 40%.

Bottom line is that in this current environment, nationally and locally, no employer will be challenged to find good job candidates and given this, it is not a good business decision to employ a referral program at this time. We will continue to monitor the labor market and adjust as appropriate.

### **Why is OTM continuing to change various policies and procedures?**

**Answer:** OTM was founded 9 years ago but is effectively 6 years old as it relates to employees and policies/procedures relating to them. The business was 'started from scratch' and all the policies and procedures were created and have been developed over time. We are and will continue to look for opportunities to improve on 'how we do what we do'. Hence, changes are part of our continuous improvement

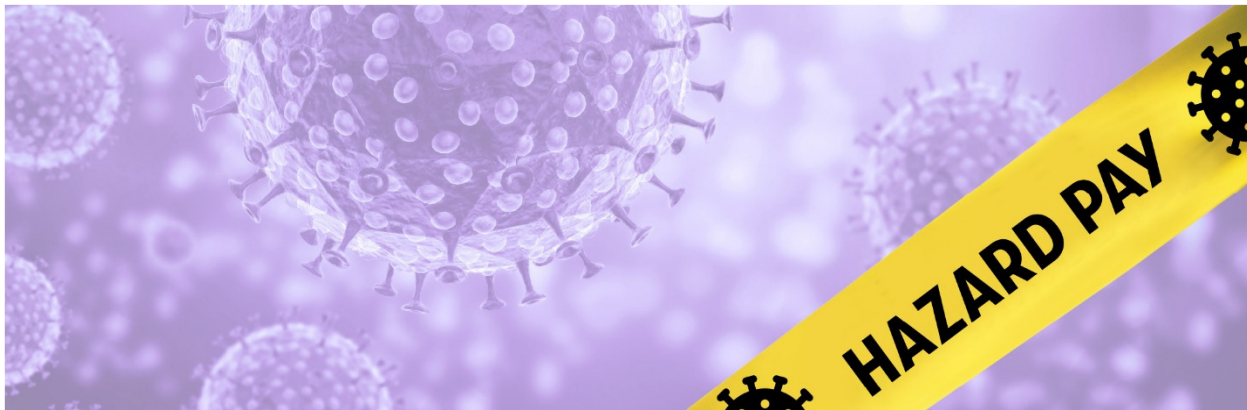


and maturity as a company. We work to make all changes in the context of our company values with a focus on prioritizing our people. We of course also factor in good financial stewardship of the business which in the larger scheme of things, also values our people because we are ensuring a viable, healthy company that continues to provide wage/salary competitive employment inclusive of ever improving benefits.

Change is our constant and taken with a good positive attitude can also be a blessing!

### In COVID-19, why are OTM employees not being paid hazard pay?

**Answer:** Hazard pay means additional pay for performing hazardous duty or work involving physical hardship. Work duty that causes extreme physical discomfort and distress which is not adequately alleviated by protective devices is deemed to impose a physical hardship. This definition does not apply to OTM jobs such as private utility locator, one-call utility locator, damage prevention driver, dispatcher, etc. Most of OTM's jobs are autonomous in nature and are somewhat congruent with physical distancing guidelines. We have tried to be proactive relative to safety as it relates to providing masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, alcohol-based wipes for vehicles, etc.



Some essential employees such as those working in supermarkets, hospitals, and other crowded workplaces have received bonuses or pay bumps to compensate for the added risks of working. This does not apply to OTM employees and the work we do.

## Why do I have to wait a whole year before I can get a raise?



**Answer:** Starting last year, OTM has implemented a process to do annualize performance reviews and annualize pay rate adjustments, if any are done. These are two separate processes, but they do have a relationship. The performance review is for the benefit of providing an employee with feedback on his/her performance of their job duties/responsibilities. This is for the benefit of knowing how one is doing and/or what can be improved upon if anything. Separately, we do a pay rate adjustment based on (1) local benchmarking, (2) a person's pay position within the benchmarked pay range, (3) the person's job performance for the prior 12 months, and (4) very importantly, the ability of the company to address any assessed pay gaps. Please note that a good/great job performance does not automatically mean a person will get a rate adjustment. This may be due to a person being already paid at the top of their pay range or simply because the company is not in the financial position to make an increase.

Having these processes including the pay rate adjustment annually creates fairness to all employees in terms of (1) having time to demonstrate good job performance and (2) being treated like their peers and others within the company. These processes typically are done in the April/May time frame of each year.