

**2008 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Progress Report**  
**Funding Opportunity Number: DTPH56-08-SN-0001**  
**CFDA Number: 20.720**

**Award Number:** *DTPH56-08-G-PHPS14*

**Project Title:** *New York State Damage Prevention Program*

**Date Submitted:** *11-7-08*

**Submitted by:** *Kevin Hopper, Operations Manager, Dig Safely New York*

**Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement**

Under this grant award Dig Safely New York will implement the use of sound and practical tools to help all stakeholders improve and contribute to New York's damage prevention issues. Specifically, funding will be used for three different projects:

- ⌚ Project 1 will be used for staff training;
- ⌚ Project 2 will be used to expand the web application into a more focused Virtual Private Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT); and
- ⌚ Project 3 will involve the development of a state-of-the-art plastic pipe locating device.

**Workscope**

Under the terms of this agreement, the Grantee will address the following elements listed in 49 USC §60134 through the actions it has specified in its Application.

- ⌚ *Element (3):* A process for reviewing the adequacy of a pipeline operator's internal performance measures regarding persons performing locating services and quality assurance programs.
- ⌚ *Element (7):* Enforcement of State damage prevention laws and regulations for all aspects of the damage prevention process, including public education and the use of civil penalties for violations assessable by the appropriate State authority.
- ⌚ *Element (8):* A process for fostering and promoting the use, by all appropriate stakeholders, of improving technologies that may enhance communications, underground pipeline locating capability, and gathering and analyzing information about the accuracy and effectiveness of locating programs.
- ⌚ *Element (9):* A process for review and analysis of the effectiveness of each program element, including a means for implementing improvements identified by such program reviews.

**Accomplishments for this period (Item 1 under Agreement Section 9.01 Progress Report: "A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.")**

**Objective 1:**

The objective of instituting in accordance with CGA best practices (CGA 8-9: Measuring Public Education Success) a software application to enable effective analysis of the success of our overall programs. The objective for Dig Safely New York to institute IRTHNet Awareness, a fully functional web application providing access to marketing information, education penetration, damage results tracking and more. At the completion of 2008, we intend to have six months of data recorded in IRTHNet Awareness to analyze; this effort will compare damages and call volume against the money and resources used in a given area for further indications of program effectiveness. Funding in the amount of \$60,000.00 is requested for staff training and to purchase the software and hardware required. Continued maintenance of the software application will be carried out by Dig Safely New York.

Progress on this objective is as follows:

- 1) Hardware for the Applications has been purchased, (dual Xeon Windows 2003 Server \$4,905.35
- 2) Software IRTHNET Awareness Software purchased and installed 45,000.00
- 3) Software SQL Server Software, MS 2005 \$6,998.00
- 4) Total spent to date on project 1: \$56,903.35 of \$60,000.00 Budget.

Remaining Items:

- 1) The application is installed and the training of Dig Safely New York's field staff has been scheduled. We are waiting on a software upgrade (no cost) in the next week to 10 days. Upon upgrade, input of six months worth of training and awareness activities will be entered into the system for analysis.
- 2) Upon data input, Dig Safely New York will be ready to start formulating six months worth of activity reports and incorporate them with NY DIRT data. This Objective is very much on target.

**Objective 2:**

To continue the theme for furthering the effectiveness of New York's Damage Prevention Programs, as outlined in element nine of the PIPES Act of 2006, the objective of instituting in accordance with CGA best practices (CGA 8-9: Measuring Public Education Success and 9-19: Root Causes Are Identified) a version of Virtual Private DIRT will be instituted. Virtual Private DIRT will provide Dig Safely New York and their members a customized version of DIRT where root causes of damages are identified for New York's geographical territory. With the support of the Department of Public Service (DPS), Dig Safely New York will set up a Virtual Private DIRT instance for use on a State level. The plan calls for a memorandum from the DPS indicating Virtual Private DIRT is the preferred method for damage data collection and reporting in New York State. Upon the issuance of the memorandum, Dig Safely New York's field staff will actively pursue members of the Northeast Gas Association and other companies to receive Virtual Private DIRT training. The training will offer assistance to those companies incorporating Virtual Private DIRT into their damage reporting methods. Funding in the amount of \$10,000.00 will be required for implementation of software, training materials, travel and labor.

Progress on this Objective is as follows:

- 1) Initial Set-up of virtual Private Dirt is complete at \$500.00 for Set-up and \$500.00 for Maintenance. An icon has been developed and placed on the Dig Safely New York Home Page in the shortcuts menu. The shot cut direct VP DIRT users to: <https://www.damagereporting.org/digsafelyny/>
- 2) A Presentation was made to the Northeast Gas Association on Thursday October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Travel costs associated with presentation. \$146.00 (292 mile @.50) Many of the

members were excited about the possibilities this project could produce to further damage prevention and many committed to input data in to the system.

- 3) Currently three companies have registered on Dig Safely New York's instance of Virtual Private Dirt with commitments and training appointments with four more companies.
- 4) Dig Safely New York's field staff is scheduled to receive training on Virtual Private Dirt on Friday November 7<sup>th</sup> (travel and personnel costs have not incurred yet).

Remaining Items:

- 1) Training and assistance to facility operators is still necessary to insure Virtual Private DIRT reaches maximum utilization in NY. It is anticipated Virtual Private DIRT will increase usage on an annual bases much like national DIRT.

**Objective 3:**

In an effort to foster and promote new and improving technologies, as emphasized in element eight of the PIPES Act of 2006, funding is requested to support the development of a state-of-the-art plastic pipe locating device. Dig Safely New York will look to support the RD&D sub organization of the Northeast Gas Association known as NYSEARCH through this grant to develop and introduce stakeholders to this handheld pipe locator through broad technology demonstrations. Funding in the amount of \$30,000.00 will be required as part of this grant proposal. Dig Safely New York would be requesting funds to help support the developer's time and cost for preparing and attending the field tests as well as the cost to upgrade one prototype and transport it from its origin (likely from England) and then transporting it to the various identified locations in New York State. The funds would also support preparation of reports documenting the actual locates made during the demonstration.

Progress on this Objective is as follows:

- 1) Upgrades to the prototype are scheduled pending contract.
- 2) Demonstration sites have been set up however scheduling of these demonstrations has yet to take place due to availability of prototype and other commitments of the vendor.
- 3) Administrative tasks have been outlined we are just waiting on the variables.

Remaining Items:

- 1) Schedule demonstrations. Due to availability and weather these will need to be moved to the end of the first quarter beginning for the second quarter.
- 2) Preparation of reports documenting the actual locates made during the demonstration.

**Quantifiable Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness (Item 2 under Agreement Section 9.01 Project Report: "Where the output of the project can be quantified, a computation of the cost per unit of output.")**

Most metrics to this project are still unavailable but we are starting to get an idea of how project 1 and 2 can provide measurements that will significantly improve public awareness tactics and reveal which programs have the greatest impact on damage reduction.

We already have data available through Virtual Private DIRT that was not available prior to this grant, as 125 damages have been collected and reported for 2008. When the project is complete, we will be able to assess awareness programs in correlation to damages. Prior to this grant a simple assessment was not available. Through this grant we will have data that will show just how effective an awareness program is in reducing area damages.

Area A: Awareness Activity 1 vs. Damages  
Area B: Awareness Activity 1 vs. Damages

Area C: Awareness Activity 2 vs. Damages  
Area D: Awareness Activity 2 vs. Damages

What activity or combination of activities provided the greatest impact on damage reduction? What type of excavation practice caused the damage?  
How do different awareness activities in different areas affect the root cause damage for a given area?

This grant allows metrics to be collected to start to real assessment of our damage prevention programs.

**Issues, Problems or Challenges (Item 3 under Agreement Section 9.01 Project Report: “The reasons for slippage if established objectives were not met. “)**

Project 1 and 2 are moving along on schedule. Project 3 has been met with some set backs and we are in the process of finalizing a timeline for the completion of this project. Upgrades to the prototype were unable to be made immediately as the vendor had made commitments during the approval process. Upgrades are scheduled pending contract. Demonstration sites have been set up; however, scheduling of these demonstrations has yet to take place due to availability of prototype and other commitments of the vendor. Finally, for the best results and to receive the greatest impact at these demonstrations we would like to refrain from performing them during the fourth quarter or early first quarter of 2009. This time of year does not provide the most conducive environment for outside demonstrations.

**Other pertinent information including, when appropriate, actions taken to address the recommendations PHMSA provided in correspondence dated [Different for each] (Item 4 under Agreement Section 9.01).**

**3a. Recommendations:**

1. Solicitation, Section 6.01, Criteria (6) states, “A commitment to quality controls in timing, personnel, and costs for deliverables offered in exchange for the grant.” We would like to see more detail on your commitment to this criterion.

In an effort to ensure quality controls and cost for deliverables, I have set up accounting codes utilizing QuickBooks to account for all expense types outlined in the proposed project budget. Currently Dig Safely New York has spent \$57,903.35 on the projects outlined in the grant and has received 35,000.00 in funds.

2. Authority is identified but the effectiveness is not evident in the information provided. We would like to see more detail on guidelines for enforcement. (i.e.: Are all stakeholders subject to citations and enforcement action? How does enforcement take place?)

Utilizing the IRTHNET Awareness software, I am exploring the possibility of importing citation data to determine the impact citations have on damages in combination with awareness programs. This data would need to be made available through the NYSDPS. Currently citations are issued for all no-call damages in NY.

### **Mid-term Financial Status Report**

The mid-term financial report has been sent as a separate attachment sent to the AA.

### **Plans for next period (remainder of grant)**

Plans for the next period remain as outlined in the project scope.

For Project One:

1. Finalize software configuration and input 6 month of data.
2. Prepare summary

Project Two:

1. Continue to pursue utility companies to submit damage data utilizing Dig Safely New York's instance of virtual private dirt.
2. Establish a damage baseline.
3. Assess damage data.
4. Import data into Awareness.
5. Report findings.

Project Three:

1. Workout timeline issues as a result of set-back.
2. Schedule prototype and sign contract with vendor.
3. Finalize demonstration sites.
4. Report demonstration results.

### **Requests of the AOTR and/or PHMSA**

As indicated above the demonstrations for the Pipe Hawk handheld plastic pipe Locator may need to be postponed as a result of vendor being unable to meet commitments with the prototype. Communications will follow to the AOTR.