

Grant Award Number: DTPH56-10-G-PHPS07
Recipient Organization: Maine Public Utilities Commission
DUNS Number: 002235294
EIN: 01-6000001
Report Period: 3-1-2010 to 3-1-2011

Project Title: Maine Public Utilities State Damage Prevention
Date Submitted: May 19, 2011
Submitted by: Gary Kenny, Gas Safety Manager

Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement

Under this grant agreement, the Maine Public Utilities Commission will implement two initiatives that will enhance Maine's already progressive Damage Prevention program: 1) Facilitate a process with stakeholders designed to result in improved clarity, accuracy and effectiveness of program publications and communications, particularly with regard to notification requirements; 2) Improve field data collection, enforcement documentation, and trend data analysis through the purchase of advanced field data collection technology (hardware and software) and an online data analysis center.

Work Scope

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

- *Element (2):* A process for fostering and ensuring the support and partnership of stakeholders, including excavators, operators, locators, designers, and local government in all phases of the program.
- *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

We completed both initiatives, and all three elements. With regard to the first initiative, and Element (2), the Utilities and Energy Committee of the Maine State Legislature (U&E Committee) requested that the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) consult with stakeholders affected by the "Dig Safe program" on how to improve the clarity, accuracy and effectiveness of the program publications and communications and clarification of the notification requirements.

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The Stakeholder process, which included two face-to-face meetings and written comments, was conducted in the fall and winter of 2009-10. A report on the process was delivered to the U&E Committee in February 2010. The stakeholder process involved a discussion of and request for comment on the current written and promotional material provided by the Damage Prevention Staff at the PUC. Since then, we have revised the materials and produced new educational and promotional materials for the Damage Prevention Program in Maine including brochures, posters, and web material. During this process we developed a new logo.

We addressed Elements (8) and (9) with a single project in the second initiative. We proposed to implement a new data collection system and corresponding database. Because the PUC does not have its own Information Technology (IT) department (it relies on the State of Maine's Office of IT (OIT) as do all other Maine state agencies), the implementation of this solution had to be coordinated through Maine's OIT.

With OIT, the PUC enter into a service agreement with Global Relief Technologies, Inc. (GRT) to provide field data collection technology (hardware and software), enabling Maine to greatly improve its current programs designed for gathering, analyzing and sharing with stakeholders information on underground pipeline locations. This will enable Maine's two Damage Prevention Investigators and other staff members to better collect information, fully GPS-referenced and photographed, in the field and wirelessly transmit this data to a centralized, online database system. The mobile hardware serves as a time multiplier for PUC staff, facilitating the collection of standardized data which is entered a single time in the field from the device, and transmitted directly to the PUC database, rather than copied over from paper forms when time allows. All program data will also be available in the field for easy reference for the Investigators.

The project also included the creation of an online collaboration center (web page) that updates and modernizes PUC's myriad databases of information, which are currently maintained across multiple formats, such as Excel, Access and hard-copy/paper files. By merging these databases into a single online collaboration center, and with the addition of field-collected and verified data, the GRT solution is a substantial improvement for the PUC to better collect, analyze and share up-to-date information with stakeholders through the use of technology. The system can creates GIS maps based on data collected in the field, as well as allows for the exporting of single records and user-created reports that are typically required by stakeholders and legislative/oversight panels.

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Through the use of this technology, the PUC is in a better position to evaluate the work of Damage Prevention Investigators and excavators and operators and to better share information with stakeholders. The time savings will greatly improve the efficiency of the PUC's overall program and assist the PUC with better managing aspects of the program such as stakeholder reporting, inspection/verification of worksites, and providing informational reports back to stakeholders and to legislative/oversight panels. This upgraded data management and analysis capability will be utilized to review and analyze the effectiveness of each program element as well as allow for more targeted enforcement and education activities.

Quantifiable Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness

This grant supports two distinct projects: new educational/outreach material and a new data storage/collection system. Neither lends itself to specific metrics.

Through developing the educational/outreach material, the program has had increased contact with many stakeholders (many of Maine's large and small utilities, the One Call System (Dig Safe Inc.), locators, and excavators). This alone is a positive outcome. In addition, we have updated our literature and web pages. This not only improves education but, because we used the insight from stakeholders, reassures our constituents that the program is listening to their concerns.

The reason for implementing a new database and data collection process is to improve our ability to measure the effectiveness of the program.

Issues, Problems or Challenges

There are no issues, problems or challenges to report.

Final Financial Status Report

The final financial report has been sent as a separate attachment to the AA.

Requests of the AOTR and/or PHMSA

No actions requested at this time.