

2014 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Progress Report
CFDA Number: 20.720

Award Number: DTPH5614GPPS13

Project Title: Nebraska State Fire Marshal State Damage Prevention Grant

Date Submitted: October 21, 2015

Submitted by: Clark Conklin

Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement

Under this grant agreement, the Nebraska State Fire Marshal will:

- Develop and implement methods for effective communication
- Foster support and partnership with stakeholders
- Support Public Awareness and Stakeholder Education

Workscope

Under the terms of this grant agreement, the Recipient will address the following elements listed in the approved application as stated in 49 U.S.C. §60134 (b).

- **Element 1 (Effective Communications):** Participation by operators, excavators, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of methods for establishing and maintaining effective communications between stakeholders from receipt of an excavation notification until successful completion of the excavation, as appropriate.
- **Element 2 (Comprehensive Stakeholder Support):** 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 5 (Public Education):** A process for fostering and ensuring active participation

Accomplishments for this period (Item 1 under Article IX, Section 9.01 Progress Report: “A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.”)

Element 1 – EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Statewide education and distribution of white marking flags preceded by an educational mailer/order form.

The email that went out to excavators enhanced awareness of the need to pre-mark the dig site and to have effective communications between stakeholders by giving information regarding the benefits of white lining and the process involved. The graphic offering the white flags was displayed on the Nebraska811 website homepage from June to September 2015 which provided a continuous reminder of the importance of pre-marking the dig site for anyone that visited the website. The flags themselves contained helpful information about the digging process as well. The number of requests indicates that the email tool is an effective marketing tool for reaching this stakeholder group and it shows that there are numerous excavators in Nebraska that are willing to white line their dig site regardless of it being mandated by law. This project was very effective in maintaining an effective method to assist stakeholders in completing a damage free excavation.

Element 2 – COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

The momentum continues for another year as the event held on February 25, 2015 grew in all areas from attendance to course offerings and positive feedback from attendees. Invitations reached all stakeholders and members that had placed a locate request in the previous six months. Vendor participation was heavily solicited and achieved positive results based on the amount of interactions and feedback to the expanded program which included incentives for interaction between attendees and vendors. The event was able to expand in other areas due to outside monetary support which allowed for excavator skills tests, t-shirt giveaways, program printing and items such as Best Practices manuals and color code cards in attendee bags. One hundred percent distribution of color code cards and CGA Best Practice manuals was achieved due to the high number of attendees. The keynote speaker received high praise in the evaluations as did the venue. A process for fostering and ensuring the support and partnership of stakeholders was achieved through the classes offered and a locate and excavator rodeo. In one class all stakeholders demonstrated their role in a line hit simulation. Billboards, meals and free online registration also supplemented the event and contributed to its success in reaching a wide variety of stakeholders.

Attachments:

- Attendee list (att 1)
- Billboard graphics (att 2)
- Email list for Safety Summit Invitation (att 3)
- Sign-in for attendees not previously registered (att 4)
- Safety Summit mailer – trifold brochure with agenda (att 5)
- Physical mailing list for Safety Summit invitation brochure (att 6)

Element 5 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Billboards: Campaigns to support the Excavation Safety Summit and National Safe Digging Month were successfully executed. Feedback was received from attendees stating that the billboards were a reminder to register for the event. The jump in attendance numbers over previous years could perhaps be attributed to this public education campaign.

Attachments:

- Billboard graphics (att 2)

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

Element 1 – EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

White Flag Education and Giveaway:

Mass mailing of educational email sent June 2015 to 6777 excavators across Nebraska. These were all the excavators that had placed a locate request since January 1, 2015. A total of 504 requests were received for a bundle of 50 white flags in response to the mailing and 491 bundles were mailed. The number of new requests for white flags has improved over years past, which indicates that for some, this project serves as a good reminder for excavators to use this tool in their damage prevention process. For others that hadn't requested flags in the past, they are now aware of this important tool and incorporating it in their damage prevention process. The number of new excavators that receive the educational mailing has increased as well, which shows that even if flags were not requested, they've been exposed to the educational information and will be more aware and possibly incorporate this practice into their daily work in the future.

Element 2 – COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Safety Summit: attendance for this event increased by 48% (from 380 to 560) over the previous year. Vendor participation increased by 20% (from 26 to 32). Physical invitations reached 6,691 excavators and members and email invitations reached 6,834 addresses.

Element 5 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Billboards: billboards were posted in ten different locations throughout Nebraska throughout the month prior to the Safety Summit event and in 11 locations throughout the month of April. Informal surveys at industry booths and verbal indications are that awareness is improved via the use of these billboards and excavators are seeing the billboards and being reminded of the need to call before digging in order to prevent damage to underground utilities.

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

No issues, problems or challenges to report.

Final Financial Status Report

Expenditures since mid-year reporting:

Element 1 – EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Shipping labels - \$120.62

Element 2 – COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Audio visual charges - \$968.73 (att 3)

Requests of the AOR and/or PHMSA

No actions requested at this time