

# **2015 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Final Report**

**CFDA Number: 20.720**

**Award Number: DTPH5615GPPS02**

**Project Title: Railroad Commission of Texas State Damage Prevention Grant**

**Date Submitted: December 8, 2016**

**Submitted by: David Ferguson**

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

Under this grant agreement, the Railroad Commission of Texas will strengthen three elements of its damage prevention program: Element 2: Comprehensive Stakeholder Support, Element 5: Public Education, and Element 8: Technology. As the enforcement authority for all damage to pipeline facilities caused by excavation, or any other movement of earth, near intrastate pipeline facilities, the Commission plans to use this grant funding to enhance its capabilities through improved technology, public education, and engagement with stakeholders in communities throughout the state.

## **Work Scope**

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 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 by all stakeholders in public education for damage prevention activities.
- Element 8 (Technology): 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.

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

### ***Element 2 (Comprehensive Stakeholder Support)***

The Railroad Commission of Texas is recognized throughout the state as the organization leading the state’s damage prevention efforts through compliance and enforcement activities, public awareness, and stakeholder education. Since the project’s start date of September 30, 2015, the RRC has participated in approximately 15 meetings and safety

day events hosted by damage prevention councils and other stakeholder organizations located throughout Texas. The safety day events often include hands-on equipment demonstrations, safety training, a live pipeline rupture and emergency response demonstration, and are attended by excavators, operators, locators, and designers, as well as officials and staff from local governments.

#### ***Element 5 (Public Education)***

The Commission determined that shifting its emphasis simply from the message to call 811 to a dual message that clearly communicates the responsibilities of both the operator and excavator to report damage to pipeline facilities following an incident would be beneficial to its intended audience. The Commission accomplished this effort through individual contacts with alleged offending operators and excavators, as well as through participation at various stakeholder events, with some crossover activities between Elements 2 and 5.

#### ***Element 8 (Technology)***

The Commission's online database system collects incident reports from both excavators and operators. The reports include information on the root causes of incidents, type of excavator, work performed, and equipment used when damage occurred. Gathering and analyzing this information allows the Commission to monitor compliance and detail any actions taken in response to the reports. Dedicated technology staff worked on updates and modifications to the online database system and was able to improve the accuracy of data input and add an internal query option.

### **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 2 (Comprehensive Stakeholder Support)***

Approximately 2,200 stakeholders, including excavators, operators, locators, and designers, along with representatives of various local governments attended the meetings and events around Texas.

#### ***Element 5 (Public Education)***

The Commission dedicated effort to educate the operator and excavator audiences on requirements to report damage to pipeline facilities following an incident was achieved through individual contacts with alleged offending operators and excavators, as well as habitual offenders. The Commission also enhanced its ability to remove incorrect contact information from its data series to better identify the target audience for public education efforts.

#### ***Element 8 (Technology)***

The Commission's efforts to improve its technology capacity allowed for improved accuracy in processing over 600 incident reports during each month of the project period. The additional internal query option increased efficiency when identifying specific reports, and system improvements eliminated a manual process of entering and updating data across multiple systems.

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

During the project period, the Commission was required to shift its approach several times. The time frame between the original application submission and the awarding of the grant was nearly nine months. During that period priorities shifted among the various Commission divisions that were necessary to implement this project as originally proposed. Throughout the project period, the Commission was able to identify an area in need of specific attention, and appreciated the opportunity to shift resources as needed. Most operators and excavators in Texas are aware of the requirement to call 811 to have lines marked before they begin excavation work. Throughout the project period, it became apparent that operators and excavators were not fully aware of the Commission’s reporting rules following an incident. As project priorities and resources shifted, the Commission was able to more directly address this critical stakeholder support and public education aspect of its program.

**Final Financial Status Report**

Please see the attached SF 270 and SF 425.

**Requests of the AOR and/or PHMSA**

No actions requested at this time.