

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

**Award Number:** DTPH5615GPPS16

**Project Title:** Nebraska State Fire Marshal State Damage Prevention Grant

**Date Submitted:** November 23, 2016

**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 by all stakeholders in public education for damage prevention activities.
- **Element 9 (Damage Prevention Program Review):** 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 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.

Educational information went out via various media to enhanced awareness of the need to pre-mark the dig site and to have effective communications between stakeholders. Information was included in the outreach which described the benefits of white lining and explained the process. The graphic offering the white flags was displayed on the Nebraska811 website homepage from June to September 2016 which provided continuous reminder of the importance of pre-marking the dig site for anyone that visited the website. The flags themselves had printed text that provided 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 that fact that it is not mandated by law. This project was very effective in perpetuating a method of assisting stakeholders in completing a damage free excavation.

## Element 2 – COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Safety Summit – see Midterm Progress Report

Damage Prevention Groups – Of the two groups planned for this grant project, one was successfully established and is meeting regularly in the Lincoln area with higher than expected participation by all stakeholder groups. Meetings were held on an as needed basis as the program was being developed. The need for rented facilities and a paid facilitator was not realized for the initial meetings.

The second group was planned for the Kearney area and is still in the planning stages with strong support for the concept indicated in the area. Due to heavy construction activity and reduced personnel, these meetings did not take place within the term of the grant.

The awards for Outstanding Excavator and Locator were welcomed among the Nebraska excavators and the ceremony in which they were awarded was very productive and meaningful.

## Element 5 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Billboards, Radio, Excavator Breakfasts

Billboards: Campaigns to support National Safe Digging Month and 811 Day were successfully executed. Feedback was received from attendees stating that the billboards were a reminder to register for the event. Further attention is drawn to the use of billboards via the supplemental use of social media and combining it with other outreach projects.

Radio: Radio advertising purchased covered both rural and metro areas in Nebraska during peak digging months.

Excavator Breakfasts: Invitations were sent for six Excavator Breakfasts throughout Nebraska in January 2016. Attendance at the events exceeded expectations necessitating the grant funds for facilities that could accommodate these large groups.

**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

Statewide education and distribution of white marking flags preceded by an educational mailer/order form. Mass mailing of an educational email was sent Jun 2016 to 5712 excavators across Nebraska. These were all the excavators that had placed a locate request between March and June 2016. A hard copy mailer went out in June 2016 as well to 6256 addresses of excavators that had placed a locate request since January 2016. In addition, social media was utilized in the form of an educational post of the white flag infographic. A total of 617 requests were received for a bundle of 50 white flags in response to the mailing and 510 bundles were mailed.

## Element 2 – COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Safety Summit: See Midterm Progress Report at which time this project was complete.

Regional Damage Prevention Groups: See Midterm Progress Report

## Element 5 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Billboards, Radio, Excavator Breakfasts

Billboards: Billboards were posted in eighteen different locations around Nebraska throughout the month of April. The campaign surrounding 811 Day involved billboards in 7 locations at various weekly intervals from mid-July through August 2016. Locations were chosen based on affording the highest number of impressions possible within budget allowances as well as targeted toward 811 Day events in order to benefit attendance thus expanding awareness.

Radio: Radio advertising funding went towards a comprehensive program in the state which utilized nine stations covering the majority of rural and metro areas in Nebraska. Three different spots were run over the main six months of digging season April through September.

Excavator Breakfasts: The hard copy invitation sent utilizing the grant funding reached over 8000 addresses yielding an attendance total of 204 for the five meetings held.

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

Element 2 – COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Regional Damage Prevention Groups: A second group was planned for the Kearney area and is still in the planning stages with strong support for the concept indicated in the area. Due to heavy construction activity and reduced personnel, these meetings did not take place within the term of the grant.

Element 9 – DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAM REVIEW

Due to heavy construction activity and reduced personnel, this program is still in development at this time.

**Final Financial Status Report**

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

No actions requested at this time