

2016 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Final Progress Report
CFDA Number: 20.720

Award Number: DTPH56-16-G-SDP17

Project Title: Nebraska State Fire Marshal State Damage Prevention Grant

Date Submitted: November 9, 2017

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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

Element 1: White Flag Giveaway

Element 2: Safety Summit, Damage Prevention Groups

Element 5: Billboards, Radio, TV, Breakfasts

Element 9: Damage Reporting Tool

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.
- **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 methods to enhance awareness of the need to pre-mark the dig site and to promote effective communications between stakeholders. Information was included in the messages 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 August 2017 which provided a 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 continues to be a very effective 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 regional groups planned for this grant project, both were successfully established in Lincoln and Kearney with participation by all stakeholder groups. The Lincoln group is meeting regularly with consistent attendance which validates the existence of the group. The Kearney group had its initial meeting with good attendance and productive discussion. The need for a paid facilitator was not realized.

Outstanding Excavator and Locator Awards: see Midterm Progress Report

Element 5 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Billboards, Radio, Excavator Breakfasts

Billboards: A campaign to support National Safe Digging Month was successfully executed mainly in the highly populated areas of the state as well as in outstate Nebraska. Further attention is drawn to the use of billboards via the supplemental use of social media and combining it with other outreach projects.

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

Excavator Breakfasts: Advertising for several Excavator and Stakeholder meetings was done either electronically or funded via other means.

Element 9 – DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAM REVIEW

Development of a system is being executed in cooperation with the Call Center to solicit and compile information from damage tickets. The system will make it easy for callers (utilities and excavators) to provide useful damage information. This information is being compiled in such a way that it could be easily transferred to the CGA DIRT tool. The DIRT tool then would provide specific information such as root causes of damage that would be specifically addressed in a damage prevention outreach program and used to assess and improve the program. All the logistics for hosting of the CGA Virtual Private DIRT tool on the Common Ground Nebraska website have been established and are ready to be implemented.

A mailing with literature designed to educate users on the existence of the tool and how to use it is in the process of being finalized and distributed via direct mailing to Nebraska excavators, on the CGN website, at CGN events and through the CGN membership to encourage continued use of the tool.

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 June 2017 to 9,498 excavators across Nebraska. These were all the excavators that had placed a locate request between March and June 2017. A hard copy mailer went out in June

2017 as well to 7,933 addresses of excavators that had placed a locate request in the previous year. In addition, social media was utilized in the form of an educational post of the white flag infographic. A total of 681 requests were received for a bundle of 50 white flags in response to the mailing.

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 regarding the Outstanding Excavator and Locator Awards. Regarding the Damage Prevention group meetings, the attendance has increased from meeting to meeting with several repeat attendees which demonstrates an interest and value in the discussion.

Element 5 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Billboards, Radio, Excavator Breakfasts

Billboards: Billboards were posted in seven different locations around Nebraska throughout the month of April and May 2017. Locations were chosen based on their ability to achieve the highest number of impressions possible within budget allowances.

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

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: Due to heavy construction activity and reduced personnel, not all of meetings projected at the time of application were held within the award period.

Element 9 – DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAM REVIEW

This program was not put into place within a timely enough manner to be implemented within the award period time frame of this grant.