

IOWA 811

ONE CALLSM

The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call

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Excavator

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WHAT'S UP BELOW



As the need for underground facility locating grows, so does the potential for locating delays due to the increased demand placed on utility locating technicians. Locating delays have become an escalating problem, resulting in significant downtime, which can result in missed deadlines and lost revenue. Planning for and managing underground facility locates is an increasingly important part of any operation that will involve excavating.



Statistics

800,000

Locate notice growth over ten years

2008

Year locate notices first exceeded 2 million

2,896,000

Annual notices sent in 2018

3 million

Locate notice count currently trending for Iowa


The number of locate notices sent from Iowa One Call to the state's underground facility operators has grown by more than 800,000 in the last ten years. Construction spending has been on the increase, with total sales of more than \$800 billion in 2018, and continued growth in commercial and residential construction forecasted through 2022.

Having to deal with an influx of nearly a million additional locate notices from new construction has placed a significant strain on Iowa's locating industry.

There is not a reserve pool of locating technicians on-hand to accommodate the increasing demand for locates. The struggle to maintain an adequate workforce of locating technicians is a constant challenge.

"We strive to maintain an adequate workforce in all of our territories. We are constantly working with our customers in order to stay ahead of their construction schedules and to be able to forecast long term and short term construction trends," says Randy Bern, president of Vanguard Utility Partners. The objective, according to him, is to stay ahead of the curve by ramping up the necessary workforce for state areas where excavation is heaviest. "If we know of a planned project ahead of time--say, an extensive fiber optics overbuild--that will result in a significant influx in locate tickets within a specific portion of the state. We can then coordinate the necessary arrangements to ramp up our local workforce in advance of any given project," says Bern.

What makes this problematic for locating contractors is the lack of advance notice provided by the designers and project managers of large-scale construction projects. "Depending on where the big projects will occur, certain parts of the state may require a larger workforce, which may require pulling locating personnel from one sector to ramp up another sector. But, these are factors that are subject to change with little to no warning or prior notice. Typically, we will factor in a five percent growth rate annually, but that is for overall activity. It's much more difficult to estimate where the growth will be needed," Bern says.



Ideally, designers and project managers who are in the planning phase of large-scale projects should bring the local utilities and the local locating community into the loop early on. Bern says that to manage his workforce effectively, he needs at least three months advance notice for large-scale operations. “Before sending a new hire into the field, we require that individual to complete a minimum of three months of training and to pass the necessary qualifications. Finding the right candidates can be a challenge.”

As the potential for locating delays increases, excavators need to take charge of the way they submit their locate requests, the way they adhere to the requirements of one call laws and the way they manage their jobsites. The best way to minimize locating delays is for the excavator to create detailed requests that capture the precise location of where a proposed excavation is scheduled to occur, which means limiting any exaggerated buffer zones. It is common, and even necessary in terms of safety and damage prevention, to add buffer space to the proposed excavation area when creating a notice of excavation; however, it’s counterproductive to “over-grid” the notice. Over-gridding occurs when an excavator submits a request that includes a significantly larger area of notice than the actual area where the excavation will occur. An example would be describing the proposed excavation area as “locate entire property” when the planned excavation occurs in only one specific area. Over-gridding can also happen when an excavator fails to provide an Iowa One Call representative with adequate descriptive information. A representative must receive precise information to map a specific area of proposed excavation effectively. If an excavator who creates and submits locate requests online fails to use mapping tools properly, the resulting locate request may end up being over-gridded (e.g. when the excavator creates a mapping polygon that covers a larger area than the excavation requires).

“ The best way to minimize locating delays is for the excavator to create detailed locate requests... which means limiting any exaggerated buffer zones. ”

Over-gridding is one of the leading causes of locating delays. It may take a locating technician multiple hours to locate and mark one large-scale project. If the area was over-gridded, that technician spent additional time providing unnecessary locate markings when they could have moved on to the next locating job. Additionally, if a locator determines ahead of time that an area of proposed excavation has been over-gridded, or if the description on the notice is inadequate, the locator can status the notice as “Not Marked – Inadequate Information.” The excavator would then need to provide additional information for the locating and marking to be completed. Before receiving their locates, an excavator would be required to white-line the area of proposed excavation any time the description provided in the original notice should be inadequate, vague or over-gridded. The most effective way to eliminate over-gridding and to create optimal excavation notices is for excavators to create and submit their notices online via the Iowa One Call ITIC NextGen ticketing system.

As of August 2019, 76 percent of all notices submitted by excavators and received by Iowa

One Call were created and submitted via ITIC. The system provides excavators with complete control over the way they create, submit and manage their notices. It also provides excavators with the best tools for creating precisely defined notices and eliminates over-gridding. ITIC gives users pop-up instructions that are easy to follow, and additional tutorials are available on the Iowa One Call website. Iowa One Call will also provide free training upon request.

Over-gridding is one of the leading causes of locating delays.

Refreshing marks, or relocating previously marked excavation sites, is another task that bogs down a locating technician's schedule, which may add to the ongoing problems associated with locating delays. Another area of the law that excavators tend to overlook is the requirement that excavators preserve their locate markings. Iowa Code 480.4(4) states: "An excavator is responsible for preserving the markings required in subsection 3 at all times during the excavation. If the markings will be destroyed or otherwise altered during the excavation, the excavator must establish suitable reference points which will enable the excavator to locate the underground facility at all times during the excavation." Requesting relocates is not a substitute. By following this legal requirement, excavators can help reduce the time that locating technicians spend in the field providing unnecessary relocates. The aforementioned legal requirement intends to prohibit

misuse of the system and to prevent unnecessary requests for relocates. Underground facility operators and locators must adhere to the legal requirement as stated in Iowa Code chapter 480.4(3)a(2): "The marking required under this subsection shall be done in a manner that will last for a minimum of five working days on any nonpermanent surface, or a minimum of ten working days on any permanent surface. If the excavation will continue for any period longer than such periods, the operator shall remark the location of the underground facility upon the request of the excavator. The request shall be made through the notification center." The current methods used for providing locate markings will last the required minimums, and during times of optimal weather, should last even longer. When excavators adhere to the requirements of preserving their locate markings and establishing suitable reference points, and when the weather is such that the original markings are maintained, the need for locators can be minimalized.

Reducing locating delays is not the sum responsibility of excavators. Underground facility operators must strive to meet the requirements of the law by providing timely locates within the required 48-hour timeline; however it is in the excavator's best interest to adopt practices that are known to expedite the locating and marking process:

- Proper ticket management is essential (i.e. creating the most defined notices possible by eliminating over-gridded areas of proposed excavation).
- Premarking the area, or white lining, is not only a requirement of the law, but one of the

most effective tools for identifying an area of proposed excavation.

- Using the online ticketing system. Excavators should note that when ITIC is used effectively and the digging area is defined precisely the need to white line the area may not be necessary.
- Preserving the locate markings and establishing suitable reference points reduces unnecessary relocations.
- Provide timely notices that coincide with eminent excavation schedules (i.e. refrain from submitting notices for projects that are not likely to occur before the notice expires). A notice of excavation is valid for 20 calendar days from the time of notice.
- Planning and design professionals, project managers and large-scale excavators should provide advance notice to underground facility operators and locating firms well in advance of large projects that will entail a heavy locating schedule (a minimum of three months notice).
- Locators and excavators should work together to establish alternative arrangements and agreements whenever possible to maintain efficient and reasonable work schedules.



Work together. Establish good communication. Dig safe.



AT THE

Iowa State Fair

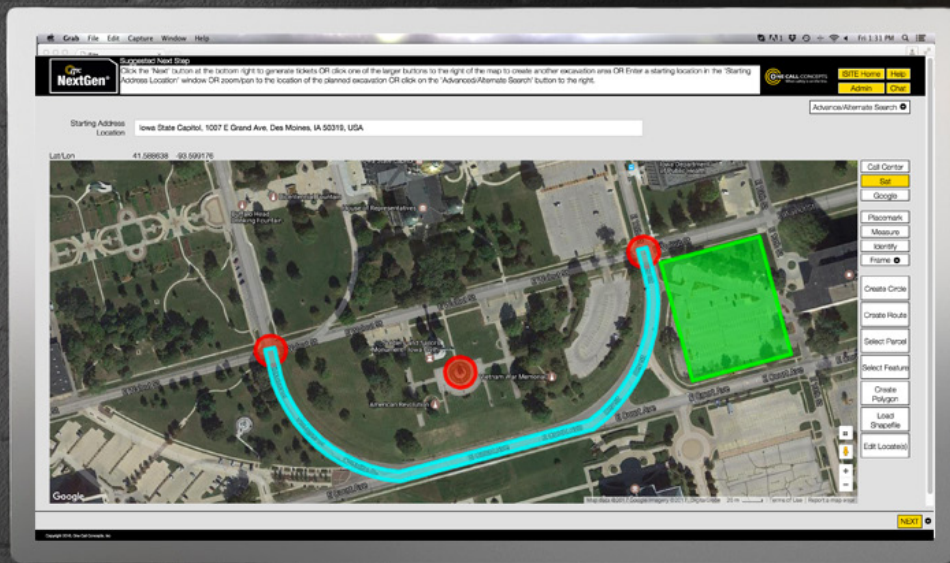
We proudly participated in the Iowa State Fair with our booth on display. The Iowa State Fair is an excellent opportunity to reach people across the entire state and spread our safe digging message. Some visitors had not heard of contacting 811 before digging, so this was the perfect chance to promote awareness. Other fairgoers were familiar with Iowa One Call but had general questions on private facilities, what activities constitute a one call notice and other scenario-related questions. We also handed out plenty of free merchandise.



The Iowa State Fair is widely popular and has become a nationally recognized event. Iowa One Call knows it is crucial to take advantage of this massively successful and highly touted event by presenting our message to the public. Our participation granted us the opportunity to reach more than a million fairgoers who walk by our booth at any given time.

Ben Booth, our public relations and communications manager, also participated in live interviews with the media this year to promote safe digging practices. Ben emphasized the importance of contacting Iowa One Call at least 48 hours before any digging project, no matter how small. Also, we were pleased to run a promotional giveaway for the chance to win a deck cooler, which garnered great public interest.

TIPS FOR MAPPING PRECISELY AND ACCURATELY



**CHECK OUT THE NEXTGEN ONLINE
TICKETING TUTORIAL [HERE!](#)**

1. Use the right tool for the job – ITIC NextGen offers a diverse array of mapping options to fit every scenario.
2. Don't over-map – ITIC NextGen builds the locate request from the mapping. Over-mapping a work area can result in wasted time and resources.
3. Double-Check your work – use the different map views and/or google street view to help ensure you've mapped accurately and completely.



PLANTING A TREE THIS FALL?

The fall season has arrived, and with it comes many home improvement projects around the state of Iowa. Homeowners often make assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a notice, even projects like planting trees and shrubs. Fall is considered one of the best times of the year to plant a new tree and shrub because it can put its energy into root growth, not foliage, and establish itself before winter.

Many homeowners don't realize that some utilities may be buried just a few inches below ground, making them

susceptible to damage when digging activities occur during home improvement projects. These could be common activities such as small landscaping projects, tree planting or garden tilling. Other non-exempt projects include putting up a fence, building a patio or home addition, terracing or landscaping, putting in a new driveway or sidewalk or pounding a post or stake into the ground.



NEW EMPLOYEE: TYLER JASS

Iowa One Call welcomes **Tyler Jass** to the team. Tyler will serve as the new public relations and communications specialist. He joined Iowa One Call in August, where he worked the Iowa State Fair booth. He is responsible for leading all Iowa One Call social media efforts, conducting presentations for our Excavation Safety Awareness Program and assisting with communications strategies. He brings a wealth of experience ranging from project management, account management and social media.

Tyler grew up in Ankeny and attended Iowa State University. He graduated with a degree in Business Marketing with a minor in Advertising. Some fun facts about Tyler include being an extra in the movie "The Longest Ride," proposing to his wife at Central Park in New York City and being an avid Hawkeyes fan. In his free time, he enjoys watching sports, playing basketball and fishing.



PARTNERS IN SAFETY AWARDS



Our new communications specialist Tyler Jass kickstarted a “Partners in Safety” program, working with individually owned hardware and rental stores across the state of Iowa. The program’s goal is to visually display our message on an eye-catching floor decal within the stores. You will likely see these floor decals displayed somewhere near the shovel aisle. This clever initiative aims to attract homeowners, reminding them to contact us before they take on any digging or landscaping projects.

We’re thrilled to see the high number of participating stores willing to spread our message and make this campaign successful. To show our appreciation, Iowa One Call has developed a “Partners in Safety Award,” with a framed certification presented to all participating stores to show they are our proud partners. We hope to continue the Partners in Safety movement and reach as many stores as possible in the state of Iowa.



INTERNATIONAL UTILITY LOCATE RODEO

The International Utility Locate Rodeo will be hosted in Springfield, Missouri, on December 12 and 13. The rodeo provides training opportunities for competitors and showcases industry products and services in partnership with a wide variety of vendors. Competitors from across North America will have an opportunity to compete against some of the best utility locators in the profession. The International Locate Rodeo has recognized damage prevention heroes and the entire utility protection industry since its inception. The event is free of charge.



INTRODUCING THE Safe Excavator App



State laws pertaining to excavation (or digging) vary – and finding the specific information you're looking for quickly can be a challenge.

The **Safe Excavator App** makes it easy to find state-specific excavation information including the following requirements or events:

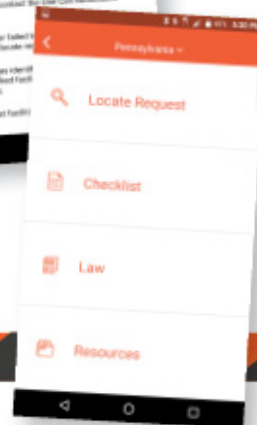
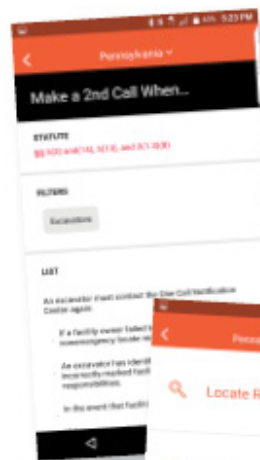
- ▼ Advance notice or wait time
- ▼ Pre-marking ('whitelining')
- ▼ 811 ticket information
- ▼ Names of local enforcement agencies and 811 call centers, also connecting you electronically to submit a locate request
- ▼ Includes safe digging tips + checklist

PLEASE CONTACT
Lindsay Sander
713.208.0273
LNS@SanderResources.com
WITH ANY QUESTIONS.



FREE to download in the App store (Apple) and Google Play (Android)!

Search "safe excavator" or "safeexcavator" and look for the orange shovel



As simple as...
1...2...3!

- 1 Select a state
- 2 Pick an activity
- 3 Research your topic

www.safeexcavator.com



Know what's below.
811 before you dig.

The National Excavator Initiative is an effort to raise the awareness of a critically important program 811.

Contacting 811 before digging is the single most critical action an excavator can take to help ensure their health and safety are protected, while at the same time preventing financial harm and environmental impact.



IOWA ONE CALL NEW COMMERCIAL SHOOT

Iowa One Call is in the process of creating and producing a new television commercial which will run across all media platforms in the spring of 2020. In September, we worked with our creative team to develop a new concept that portrays a real-life example of a homeowner who didn't contact Iowa One Call and the dangers associated with their decision. Our team was able to get a behind-the-scenes look at our commercial, while witnessing the equipment and hard work that goes into conveying our message in a memorable way.

We are dedicated to conveying our message to the public to uphold our primary goal: to maintain the integrity of underground facilities. Investing the time and resources into this commercial allows us to connect our message to a mass audience.



TREE AND SHRUB GIVEAWAY

Following the new commercial shoot, we hosted a giveaway on social media for the chance to win the beautiful honeylocust tree and hydrangea bush that were used on-set. This was another way for us to give back to the community while garnering interest from Iowa residents.



IN THE NEWS



Local Excavation and Safety News From Around the Web



Don't miss the Iowa Contractor Management and Safety Conference, December 5 - 6, 2019.

NUCA of Iowa's one-day contractor management and safety conference offers the unique opportunity for contractor management and safety directors to network with other utility construction owner/managers and safety directors from across the Iowa. Experts will present educational seminars and open-forum discussions on the most important and relevant information contractors need ... [\[Learn More\]](#)



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www.IOWAONECALL.com

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