

IOWA 811

ONE CALLSM

The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call

Vol. 29, No. 3

Excavator

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WHAT'S UP BELOW



ABOUT LOCATING DELAYS

The timely and accurate locating and marking of underground facilities is a requirement of the law. Iowa Code Chapter 480 requires all underground facility operators to complete the locating and marking process within 48 hours after receiving the “locate notice” from Iowa One Call (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays). So why are there so many instances of delayed locates—i.e., “non-responses”—when operators/locators fail to provide the required timely locates? In short, it’s because the quantity of locate requests being transmitted to underground facility operators, and the size and scope of the excavations being performed, exceeds the capabilities of the current/designated locating workforce.

It’s not just in Iowa. Across the country, one call systems are dealing with similar instances involving locating delays. The high demand from the excavating community for underground facility operators to locate and mark their facilities ahead of planned excavation schedules, many of which involve extensive and/or ongoing operations, is having an impact on both the locating and excavating communities. Operators struggle to complete the routine daily onslaught of locate tickets on time, while excavators are caught in a no-win situation as they must decide whether to gamble by digging without locate markings or to delay their project schedules while waiting for locates to be completed. Unfortunately, there doesn’t appear to be any easy fix.

The business model for today’s major utilities is to farm out the locating and marking of underground facilities to professional contract locating firms. This practice places enormous responsibility on contract locating firms as one firm may handle the locating needs of multiple large utilities, and in many cases the combined locating needs of the state’s largest utilities. A spike in demand for locates that affects a large segment of the state (such as when a major fiber optic overbuild is underway) can catch a contract locating firm off guard, especially when the demand impacts all utilities handled by the firm.

This is exactly what happened earlier this year when three major fiber overbuilds, conducted by three major communications companies, were underway at the same time involving hundreds



of miles of excavation operations. Had the utilities been provided adequate advance notice by the communications companies, they, along with their contracted locating firm(s), may have been able to ramp up the necessary hiring process and required workforce in time to meet the demand. Ramping up a workforce in time to meet demand, however, is not necessarily an easy task either, especially given the shortage of qualified available personnel and the time required to train and hire new candidates.



In many ways, the technicians who provide the locating and marking process in the field are up against advancing technologies. Advances in excavation equipment, such as the latest and greatest horizontal directional boring equipment, enable excavators to cover more ground in one day than they could cover in a week less than two decades ago. The thing is, the locating and marking of any planned excavation site is handled the same way it was back then, with a person walking the planned excavation area with a handheld receiver/transmitter. Combine this with the fact that the demand for locates has nearly tripled in that time. In 2001, the total notices sent from the Iowa One Call center to the state's underground facility operators was just over 1.6 million. In 2020, Iowa One Call sent more than 3.5 million notices to underground facility operators across the state. Given these types of changes, it's easily understandable why there are so many locating delays today. One might ask how it is even possible for operators/locators to meet current demands. On the flip side, excavators are being held up by locating delays more than ever before.

Inroads to addressing these problems are not so simple. The legislating of new one call requirements has been a recent topic of discussion among industry stakeholders, but thus far has not yielded any mutually agreed upon remedies. During the 2020 Iowa

legislative session, a proposed bill was introduced to mitigate locating delays by requiring an extended "required waiting period," which would have provided operators/locators with more time to complete the locating and marking process. Ultimately, the proposed bill failed to pass the necessary House and Senate votes, primarily due to differences between the primary stakeholder groups: excavator representatives and operator representatives.

Whereas future legislation may or may not be immediately foreseeable, operators, locators

and excavators must work in collaboration by embracing the best practices and tools currently available to mitigate the effects of locating delays. As part of an ongoing effort to develop new solutions to the most relevant issues, Iowa One Call will begin implementing a pilot program this winter designed to help mitigate locating delays by providing an option for excavators to delay their planned excavation start times. The program, currently deemed a "dynamic start time option," will be provided as a voluntary option for excavators at the time they provide notice to the Iowa One Call center. The pilot program will be tested for effectiveness and a determination will be made by the Iowa One Call board as to whether it will be implemented as a new tool on a full-time basis.

At present, the best solution to mitigating locating delays is for operators, locators and excavators to work closely together by establishing the most effective communications policies and practices. A policy that disregards direct one-on-one communications is entirely unacceptable. Direct communication between locators and excavators via a telephone conversation or in-person meeting should always occur in place of emails or other written communications. Written communications can



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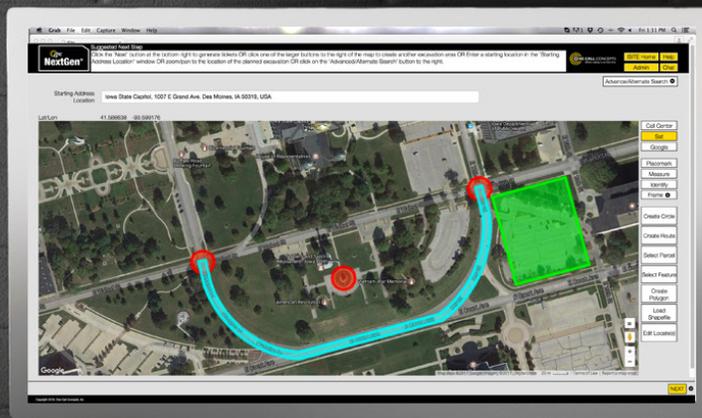
be used effectively for documentation purposes, or as a supporting resource, but only direct “person-to-person” communications should be used when coordinating agreements for alternative arrangements (unless otherwise agreed upon between an excavator and operator/locator).

Iowa law requires an excavator to provide a telephone number at which the excavator will be available at all times during the planned excavation. Operators/locators should use this telephone number as the primary source for communications, especially when an operator/locator seeks to coordinate an agreement with an excavator. Alternative arrangements to extend the required locating and marking completion time are only valid—legal—when an agreement has been made between an excavator and the operator/locator.



Iowa One Call wishes everyone a safe and productive rest of 2021. Dig safe!

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.



IOWA STATE FAIR

The Iowa State Fair made its long-awaited return following a cancellation in 2020 due to the pandemic, the first cancellation of the event since World War II. According to the Iowa State Fair, total attendance for 2021 was estimated at 1,094,480—which would amount to roughly 109,448 attendees per day over the 10-day period. Overall, attendance at the fair dipped nearly 6.5% from its all-time attendance record of 1,170,375 visitors, set in 2019. Considering the 2021 fair was a “bounce-back” year from an unprecedented 2020, attendance was still rather promising.

Iowa One Call had a booth in the varied industries area for the entirety of the 2021 Iowa State Fair, handing out promotional items and educating the thousands of fairgoers that passed by each day. New to the Iowa One Call booth this year was a redesigned table: a visually appealing tablecloth that depicts a shovel in the ground with underground utilities, dirt and grass surrounding the area. The intent of this graphic was to catch the attention of fairgoers while giving them a better understanding of what Iowa One Call does and the importance of protecting underground infrastructure that we all so heavily rely on. The Iowa One Call team also handed out a plethora of promotional items to create further awareness, including pens, pencils, pamphlets, magnets, tattoos, fruit-infuser water bottles and the famous yard sticks.

Additionally, Iowa One Call was proud to partner with KCCI throughout the fair, participating in four Facebook Live interviews on the KCCI Facebook page (which has more than half a million followers) to discuss the importance of safe digging and damage prevention. After each interview, a raffle was hosted with a prize given to a lucky winner. The winners all received an Iowa One Call-branded Mammoth cooler. The grand prize was a Pit Boss Smoker & Grill, which was promoted on the KCCI website for the entire month of August. The winner of the Pit Boss was Glen Fortsch; Glen was extremely excited to use the Pit Boss for the upcoming football season.



IowaStateFair

2021 Attendance
1,094,480

Attendees per day
109,448





SOCIAL MEDIA GIVEAWAY



During the Iowa State Fair and throughout the months of August and September, Iowa One Call hosted a social media giveaway. To enter the contest, people were asked to simply “like” the Iowa One Call Facebook page. The contest was promoted via a poster at the Iowa One Call booth for the duration of the Iowa State Fair, and via a paid Facebook advertisement. There were two prizes for this contest: the first place winner, Emily Bates, received an Iowa One Call-branded Mammoth cooler and a \$50 gift card to Hy-Vee. The second place winner, Dwaine Keller, received a \$50 gift card to Hy-Vee. Both Emily and Dwaine were excited to have been selected as winners and plan to use the prizes toward football season festivities. This promotion was given a lot of traction due to the willingness of Hy-Vee to partner with Iowa One Call by donating the two \$50 gift cards.

This campaign yielded unprecedented results and awareness for the Iowa One Call Facebook page. Specifically, this giveaway delivered **3,617 new Facebook likes** and **188,269 impressions** to the page. Before this campaign, the page had 1,495 likes and now has 5,112. Likes/followers on a Facebook page are what generate awareness, interactions and engagement for a business. The more likes/followers a page has, the larger the platform is to promote awareness, create interactions and ultimately drive action to contact Iowa One Call before any digging is done.





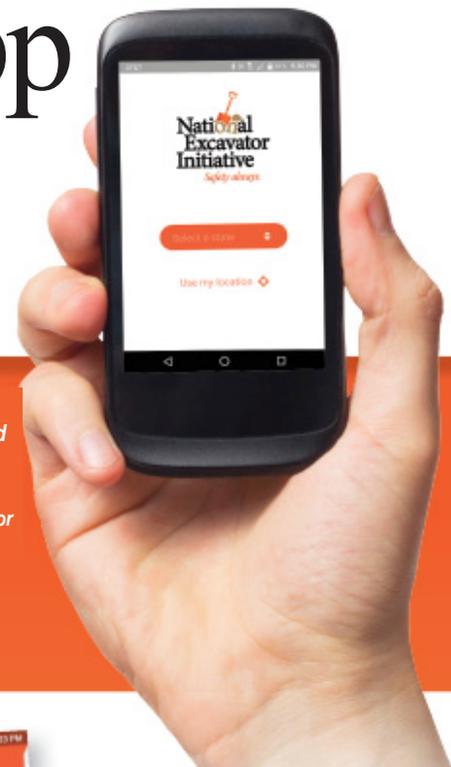
2021 USERS' GROUP CONFERENCE

In September, Iowa One Call attended the 2021 Users' Group Conference hosted by One Call Concepts (OCC). OCC manages the database and call center operations for Iowa One Call, along with several other states. Each year dating back to 1997, OCC invites the states that they manage to attend Users' Group, which is designed to bring together damage prevention stakeholders from OCC notification centers across the country. This year's conference, held in Palm Springs, California, covered many informative topics, including OCC's technology and product launches, new marketing initiatives, legislative discussions and damage prevention efforts across the country. Additionally, New York 811 unveiled and showcased their VR-X-SIM Vehicle, also referred to as the "future of damage prevention." The conference usually offers fun networking events, which this year included viewing a live polo match and an evening at musical legend Frank Sinatra's former house.

Overall, the trip resulted in a terrific opportunity to network and brainstorm with some of the leading minds in damage prevention. The team at Iowa One Call embraced the shared experiences, built new relationships, prepared for new challenges, collectively devised new marketing and public relations strategies, and obtained insightful tools to further benefit Iowa's current status of damage prevention and safe digging practices.



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:

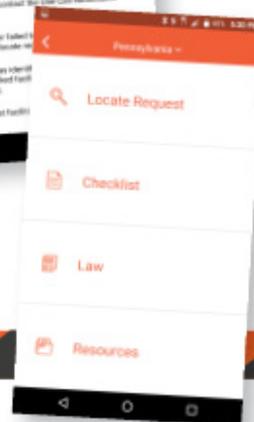
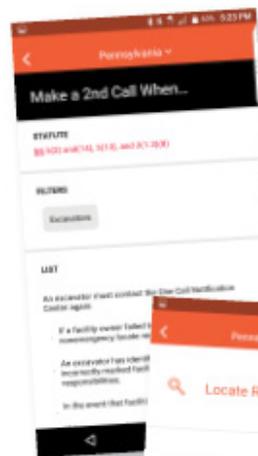
- ▼ Advance notice or wait time
- ▼ Pre-marking ('whitelining')
- ▼ 811 ticket information
- ▼ Names of local enforcement agencies and 811 call centers, also connecting you electronically to submit a locate request
- ▼ Includes safe digging tips + checklist

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.



2022 EXCAVATION SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM

In 2022, Iowa One Call plans to host its **Excavation Safety Awareness Program (ESAP)** via in-person meetings. Each year the ESAP meetings are typically hosted by Iowa One Call in-person, but with the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 and considering safety of attendees, the team made the decision to host 2021 meetings via Zoom webinars. Hosting meetings via the Zoom platform worked out surprisingly well, with minor glitches. However, certain elements of the in-person meetings can never fully be replaced, such as making connections, networking and hearing a speaker live. That's why the Iowa One Call team is looking forward to returning to in-person meetings, hosting contractors around the state for a lunch and educating excavators and utility operators about the importance of damage prevention. There will be 10 in-person meetings hosted throughout the month of January, and six meetings in February hosted via Zoom for attendees who cannot make arrangements to attend the in-person meetings. Iowa One Call will offer sanitizing stations and masks (optional) at the meetings to help maintain a safe environment for attendees. Stay tuned to our next newsletter for an in-depth overview of the 2022 ESAP meetings, including program content and topics, venue locations, how to register and more!

2022 ESAP Sessions

JANUARY	FEBRUARY
In-Person Meetings	Zoom Meetings
Tue, January 4 at 11:30 AM	Tue, February 1 at 10 AM
Wed, January 5 at 11:30 AM	Thurs, February 3 at 10 AM
Thurs, January 6 at 11:30 AM	Tues, February 8 at 10 AM
Mon, January 10 at 11:30 AM	Wed, February 9 at 10 AM
Tue, January 11 at 11:30 AM	Tues, February 15 at 10 AM
Wed, January 12 at 11:30 AM	Thurs, February 17 at 10 AM
Tues, January 18 at 11:30 AM	<p>*NOTE: Find locations for the in-person meetings on the Iowa One Call website. The virtual (Zoom) meetings are NOT assigned to a specific location. You may select any of the (6) Zoom meetings based on your preferred date/time.</p>
Thurs, January 20 at 11:30 AM	
Tues, January 25 at 11:30 AM	
Thurs, January 27 at 11:30 AM	

For more information on the 2022 ESAP meetings, visit [Iowa One Call online](#).

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JAN 04

Excavation Safety Awareness Program (Tuesday, Jan 4, 2022)

by Iowa One Call
43 followers [Follow](#)

Free

[Register](#)

Each year Iowa One Call updates excavators, locators and facility operators on one call requirements. This ESAP meeting will be in-person.

About this event

This Iowa One Call Excavation Safety Awareness Program Meeting will be held in-person.

The ESAP meetings are free of charge and lunch is provided.

The 2022 program will feature important information about the rules, regulations and requirements of the "Iowa One Call law," an overview

Date and time
Tue, January 4, 2022
11:30 AM - 2:00 PM CST
[Add to calendar](#)

Location
Holiday Inn Council Bluffs @ Ameristar
2202 River Rd
Council Bluffs, IA 51501
[View Map](#)

IN THE NEWS



Local Excavation and Safety News From Around the Web



2021 Users' Group Meeting Recap

occugmeeting.com

The 2021 One Call Concepts Users' Group meeting in Palm Springs back in September was a great opportunity for one call centers from all over the country to network and compare notes. (See page 6 for more details on Iowa One Call's participation.) There is now a video recap and photos on the UG website, and OCC has made the presentations from the conference available for your reference... [\[Learn More\]](#)



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