

IOWA
ONE CALLSM

The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call

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Excavator

QUARTERLY

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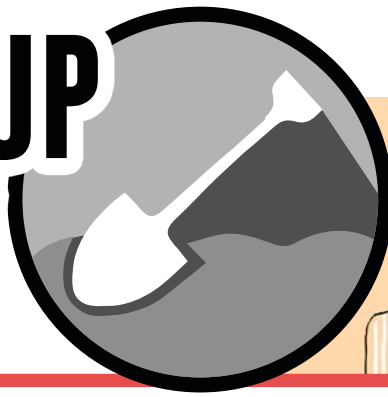
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WHAT'S UP BELOW



CLOSING THE COMMUNICATION GAP: WHY TICKET TALK MATTERS

For years, excavators expressed understandable frustration with an uneven communication process: locators could leave comments and ticket status information on a ticket, but excavators had no way to reply through the same system. That gap often led to locating delays and occasional disputes that could have been avoided with basic two-way communication.

Those concerns became a driving force during the 2024 Iowa legislative session, when industry representatives—including the Associated General Contractors of Iowa—pushed for changes to Iowa Code Chapter 480. Lawmakers ultimately agreed, recognizing the need for a more efficient communication process and incorporating that industry-supported language into the amended statute. As a result of those amendments, the Iowa One Call notification center was directed to implement a two-way, ticket-based messaging process, and Iowa One Call developed and launched “Ticket Talk”—an optional communication tool built into the existing online ticketing system. The goal was straightforward: give excavators and locators a simple, documented way to exchange information directly through the ticket itself.

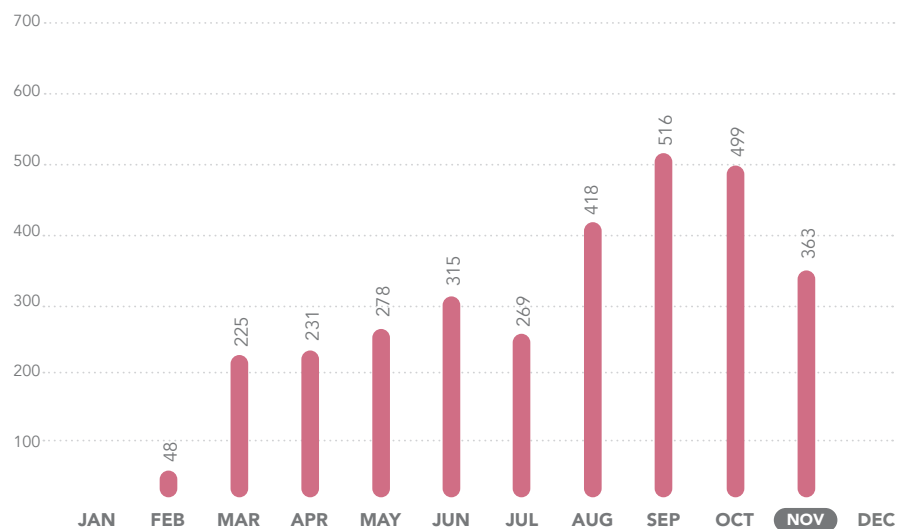
USAGE IS GROWING— BUT STILL FAR BELOW ITS POTENTIAL

Ticket Talk went live on February 24, 2025. In its first month, users exchanged only 48 messages. November, that number had risen to 363 messages. While this is steady progress, it represents just 0.7% of all tickets in November (363 messages tied to 48,564 tickets).

Given how vocal the excavating community was in pushing for this capability, it is surprising that more excavators have not taken advantage of it.

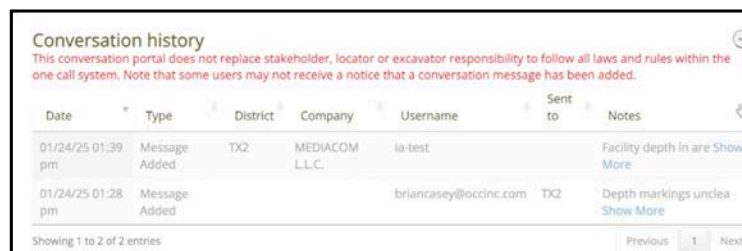
Ticket Talk has the potential to prevent misunderstandings, mitigate locating delays, and provide clear documentation, and yet it is being used on fewer than one percent of active tickets.

Total Number of Ticket Talk Conversation Messages



WHY TICKET TALK MATTERS

Ticket Talk gives excavators, locators, and facility operators the ability to send and reply to messages through Ticket Check, the same system used to post locate status updates. When a message is added to a ticket, all stakeholders on that ticket can view the thread and respond if needed.



Date	Type	District	Company	Username	Sent to	Notes
01/24/25 01:39 pm	Message Added	TX2	MEDIACOM LLC	la-test		Facility depth in are Show More
01/24/25 01:28 pm	Message Added			briancasey@occinc.com	TX2	Depth markings unclear Show More

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

This matters for two key reasons:

1. Better Communication in the Field

Questions can be answered, discrepancies can be addressed, and expectations can be clarified before they turn into conflicts or delays.

2. Reliable Documentation

Iowa One Call retains every message thread for seven years, along with the ticket itself. This creates a verifiable record of what was communicated, when it was communicated, and to whom.

HOW EXCAVATORS ARE ALREADY USING TICKET TALK

To date, excavators have used Ticket Talk to:

- **Dispute or clarify locator responses, such as an “agreed to marking schedule” status or other comments they believe are inaccurate or incomplete.** For example, some locators have historically selected the agreed to marking schedule status even when no mutual agreement was reached. With Ticket Talk, an excavator can immediately respond and document that no such agreement was made, ensuring the record on the ticket reflects the facts.
- **Report discrepancies found in the field, such as unmarked or mismarked facilities.** In some cases, an excavator may know from prior experience that a facility exists in the area, even if its precise location is unknown. Ticket Talk allows the excavator to document these concerns in real time when markings are missing or appear incorrect.
- **Confirm or clarify locator questions, including the ability to upload supporting photos (e.g., verifying white lining).** Taking photos in the field is a prudent documentation practice, and Ticket Talk allows excavators to upload those images directly to the ticket to support or clarify the information being exchanged.
- **Ask about ticket status, including why a ticket may have been stasured as “Not Marked – Inadequate Information.”** In some cases, it may not be clear to the excavator what information is missing or why the locator could not proceed. Ticket Talk allows the excavator to request clarification, upload additional details if needed, or confirm that sufficient information was already provided so they can avoid unnecessary delays.
- **Send courtesy alerts to others listed on the ticket, such as notifying others of private or secondary lines not marked by a locator.** Ticket Talk may also be used to share other helpful courtesy notices—for example, alerting locators to open trenches, site hazards, or even the presence of a protective dog in the yard—so everyone arriving on site is aware and can proceed safely.
- **Request helpful feedback, such as asking when a locator plans to be on site.** Locators may also use Ticket Talk as a courtesy to confirm whether an excavator has asked the property owner about private facilities (such as irrigation systems, invisible pet fences, or other non-operator lines) so potential conflicts can be identified before work begins.

Locators and operators can likewise initiate Ticket Talk messages when they need clarification or want to document an issue. In short, either side can start the conversation, and all utilities and excavators tied to the ticket can participate in the thread.

KEY FACTS AND LIMITATIONS

Ticket Talk is:

- A two-way, ticket-based communication tool
- Optional, but available to all excavators, locators, and operators
- Fully integrated into the electronic Ticket Check system
- Visible to all stakeholders tied to a ticket
- Readable and retained for seven years
- Available for use on all tickets (initiate or reply to messages) until the ticket expires (25 calendar days)

Ticket Talk **cannot** be, and therefore **should never** be used to:

- Provide a notice of planned excavation ("locate ticket")
- Request a locate, relocate, or nonresponse ticket
- Cancel a ticket
- Change or expand the scope of work
- Replace the required notice process

It may be used to coordinate an agreed to marking schedule, but only if both parties confirm through the message thread and the locator statuses the ticket appropriately.

THE BOTTOM LINE: IT'S TIME TO PUT TICKET TALK TO WORK

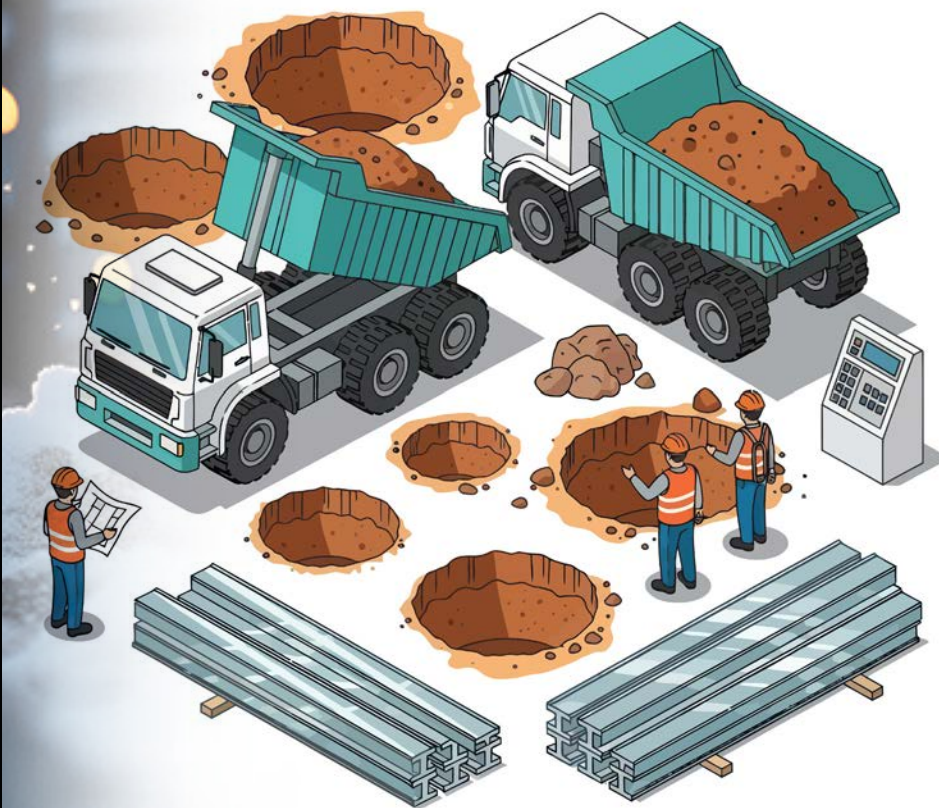
Ticket Talk exists because the excavating community demanded a two-way communication method—and the legislature agreed. The system is now in place, it works, and it is easy to use. What's left is for excavators to start embracing it.

Even if used only for clarification or simple confirmations, Ticket Talk can:

- Reduce misunderstandings
- Improve coordination
- Document important conversations
- Help resolve disputes faster
- Strengthen communication between excavators and locators

Iowa One Call provides training and support for anyone who needs assistance. An online video tutorial is available [HERE](#) and the Help Desk can be reached at **563-884-7762**.

This tool was built to improve the process. Now it's time to put it to work.





A NEW VENTURE – IOWA ONE CALL PARTNERS WITH IOWA'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES

Iowa One Call is proud to announce a new “Name, Image, and Likeness” (NIL) partnership with four of Iowa's most recognized universities: the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, and Drake University.

This initiative represents a new milestone in Iowa One Call's ongoing mission to promote safety, awareness, and community engagement across the state. Developed in collaboration with Learfield marketing agency, the campaign officially launched on **October 6**, combining Iowa pride with the shared goal of supporting communities and student-athletes alike.



The **Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)** program allows student-athletes to receive compensation for the use of their personal brand through sponsorships, partnerships, or promotional activities while continuing their education and athletic careers. NIL opportunities help student-athletes gain real-world experience, financial support, and community connections, all while strengthening relationships between universities, businesses, and fans.

Through this collaboration, Iowa One Call joins forces with Iowa's most beloved educational institutions, celebrating not only their athletic excellence but also their dedication to leadership, education, and public service.

EVERY GREAT PLAY STARTS WITH A CALL.

Call 811 before you dig. It's the game plan.



Keep an eye out on social media for these NIL collaborations featuring student-athletes from across the state. Follow Iowa One Call on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) (formerly Twitter) to see the latest partnered images, stories, and updates celebrating Iowa pride and safe digging awareness.

Together, we're reminding everyone that **every great play, starts with a call!**

As this partnership grows, Iowa One Call looks forward to cheering on each university and its athletes on the field, in the classroom, and throughout the communities they inspire.

EVERY GREAT PLAY STARTS WITH A CALL.

Call 811 before you dig. It's the game plan.



NEW BOARD MEMBER



Richard Conger is the senior director of area operations at Mediacom, bringing over 22 years of experience in telecommunications and infrastructure management to the role. He leads a large field and facility team and oversees Mediacom's central Iowa operations, reporting out of the Des Moines location. Richard drives strategic initiatives focused on enhancing customer experience and improving operational efficiency. His areas of expertise include budget oversight, technical leadership, network development, and collaboration with local governments. He is committed to safety, service quality, and building strong community partnerships.

Outside of work, Richard enjoys outdoor activities, traveling with his wife Jamie and their two daughters, and working on home projects.

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 ('whitelineing')
- ▼ 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.

**National
Excavator
Initiative**
Safety always.

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

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

Google play

Available on the App Store

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.



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

DAMAGE PREVENTION AND RISKY RONNIE WON SOMETHING?

NEW DAMAGE PREVENTION VIDEO PRESENTED BY NORTHERN NATURAL GAS

A new collaborative video between Iowa One Call, Northern Natural Gas, and the Iowa Utilities Commission is now complete and set for release. The project has been months in the making, led by **Iowa One Call Board Member John Kahrs** of Northern Natural Gas.

This impactful piece features a real-life account of a near-strike incident on a Northern Natural Gas pipeline that occurred when two brothers were performing routine excavation work on farmland in rural central Iowa. Through their firsthand account, along with the accounts from the Northern Natural Gas employees who intervened to prevent a potentially devastating hit, the video emphasizes the critical importance of safe digging practices.

At its core, the project serves as a reminder that even the most routine digging activities can carry serious risks. It reinforces the lifesaving importance of calling before you dig, understanding utility locates, and taking every excavation project seriously—no matter the size or setting.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

A special thank you to Final Draft Films for bringing this vision to life and to all the organizations involved sharing their important message of safety.



SECOND TIME'S A CHARM? RISKY RONNIE WINS AN EMMY

After being nominated for a second year in a row, Ronnie has finally done it! The “Even Ronnie Knows” campaign has been honored with the **2025 Upper Midwest Emmy Award** in the category of Public Service Announcement.

This recognition marks the second major award for Risky Ronnie, following his 2024 “Best in Show” win at the American Advertising Federation (AAF) Awards. The campaign continues to be a standout example of how creative storytelling and humor can deliver powerful public safety messages. We are incredibly thankful for and proud of our partners at Trilix, whose vision and production expertise brought Risky Ronnie to life. Their talent and dedication have helped make Ronnie a household name across Iowa.

And the best is yet to come—there's much more in store for Ronnie as we gear up for a brand-new campaign launching next year. So, stay tuned as Ronnie returns to make a mess in 2026... and even HE knows to never dig without contacting Iowa One Call first!

CATEGORY #601

Public Service Announcement

 **2025 Upper Midwest Emmy® Award Recipient**
Iowa One Call: Even Ronnie Knows Campaign

Trilix

- **Brett Adams** – Executive Producer
- **Cole Bates Norum** – Director
- **Nick Mongar** – Cinematographer
- **Kyle Stoutenberg** – Videographer
- **Jack Sarcone** – Videographer
- **Chad Adams** – Videographer
- **Alex Rich** – Producer
- **Brooke Schaffner** – Audio Mixer
- **Josh De Lanoit** – Visual Effects





LOOKING AHEAD – IOWA EXCAVATION SAFETY SUMMIT

Safety, communication, and teamwork are at the core of every successful job site—and once again, Iowa's underground industry is coming together to strengthen all three. Iowa One Call is excited to invite contractors, excavators, locators, utility operators, municipal crews, and industry stakeholders to the 2026 Iowa Excavation Safety Summit on January 29, 2026, at the Jacobson Exhibition Center on the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. Admission is FREE, and all are encouraged to attend.

This annual statewide summit is quickly becoming Iowa's premier excavation safety event, bringing together the people, tools, and strategies that prevent damages, reduce risk, and keep our communities protected. Attendees will enjoy a full day of professional development, hands-on learning, live demonstrations, and in-person networking with peers, experts, and industry leaders from across the state.

The 2026 program will feature keynote speaker Aaron Putze, presenting "Excavating Influence: Growing Trust, Connections & Impact for Greater Safety & Success on Every Work Site." Aaron's message emphasizes building trust, strengthening crews, improving communication, and reinforcing leadership qualities that lead to safer and more productive job sites. In addition to the keynote, attendees will hear from leading experts on construction and excavation safety, Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations and enforcement, utility locating practices and training, and enforcement and penalty provisions presented by the Iowa Attorney General's Office. These sessions will deliver practical strategies to improve safety, enhance communication, and reduce liability in the field.

In addition to high-value education, the Summit includes several popular features that make this event both informative and memorable, including the Excavator Rodeo, prize raffles, a live game show, a roving reporter, and exhibitor demonstrations, along with plenty of opportunities to visit with vendors and explore new tools, equipment, and technologies. Breakfast and lunch are provided at no cost, and attendees will once again have the chance to win great prizes throughout the day.

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Watch the recap video from last year's event online!

Date: January 29, 2026
Location: Richard O. Jacobson
Exhibition Center at the Iowa
State Fairgrounds
Address: 3000 East Grand Avenue,
Des Moines, Iowa



Register or learn more at:
IowaSafetySummit.com.



The Summit also offers exclusive opportunities for sponsors and exhibitors, including premium booth locations, advertising exposure, equipment displays, and direct access to targeted industry professionals. Limited spaces are available, and early registration is encouraged. [Click here to register now.](#)

Mark your calendar, gather your crews, and plan to attend. Join us in Des Moines on January 29, 2026 for this free, one-day event focused on improving safety, strengthening communication, and supporting Iowa's damage prevention mission.

IN THE NEWS



*Local Excavation and
Safety News From
Around the Web*



Risky Ronnie Wins an EMMY

midwestemmys.org

After being nominated for a second year in a row, Ronnie has finally done it! The “Even Ronnie Knows” campaign has been honored with the 2025 Upper Midwest Emmy Award in the category of Public Service Announcement... [\[Learn More\]](#)

Hayward Explosion: Family of 5 Lost Everything in Blast

www.ktvu.com

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the blast, which occurred after a third-party construction crew struck an underground natural gas line on the 800 block of Lewelling Boulevard, according to PG&E. The utility said the line was hit around 7:35 a.m., nearly two hours before the blast... [\[Learn More\]](#)

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