

IOWA 811

ONE CALLSM

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Excavator

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What's Up Below

Outreach Communications and Reaching a Milestone

The year, 2019, marks a significant milestone for Iowa One Call. As of December, the number of outgoing transmissions (“locate notices”) from the call center to the state’s underground facility operators has surpassed three million. Ongoing increases in the number of annual locate notices has been a trend in Iowa for the past decade; with a 50-percent increase (nearly one million additional transmissions) since 2009.

The ongoing increase in the number of annual locate notices presents a significant challenge for the responding locating technicians who are tasked with providing on-time locating and marking services. Unfortunately, the increased demand for locating and marking services all too often results in locating delays, which is an escalating problem for excavators. Planning for and dealing with locating delays has become a common practice for contractors and excavators. Iowa One Call has been aggressive in developing a state of the art system designed to enhance communications between excavators and locators, and to aid in expediting the locating and marking process.

Developing new systems, such as the NextGen online ticketing system, a system that allows users to create highly accurate descriptive locate notices, takes time to implement, test and calibrate. Once the

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testing and enhancements are complete, the challenge for Iowa One Call is to effectively reach and educate all of the state’s contractors, designers, engineers, excavators, and even homeowners. Iowa One Call’s commitment to establishing effective outreach and communications channels can be seen in the organization’s extensive annual public awareness and education campaigns that target professionals and private/residential stakeholders. In 2019 Iowa One Call allotted more than half a million dollars

to leverage these campaigns through traditional advertising, media relations, social media, trade shows, training seminars, industry-related speaking engagements, and many other customized marketing and promotional activities.

People familiar with Iowa One Call's more recent marketing efforts may realize that there has been a change in the message. The memorable tagline, "call before you dig," has been replaced with a tagline that is more relevant today: "Click before you dig." Iowa One Call's strategic objective to convert "dial-in users" to "online users" stems from that fact that online ticketing provides users with a process that is superior in every way to the old dial-in process. Currently, proper use of the online ticketing system is likely the best way excavators can mitigate the problems associated with locating delays. The system allows users to create the types of locate tickets that locating technicians want to receive; tickets that are highly detailed, accurate and precise. Inaccurate locate requests are one of the primary reasons why locates become delayed; including tickets that are overly board in description and lack specific details. Iowa One Call still promotes the 811 three-digit dialing number and will continue to do so because of the recognition 811 has generated over the years, and because there are still some users who are reluctant to make the switch to online ticketing. The emphasis for the foreseeable future, however, will be on promoting the "click before you dig" message in order steer users to the online process, which ultimately provides greater overall system accuracy and efficiency.

Additional milestones reached in 2019 include the conversion of FAX notifications to electronic transmissions and the incorporation of parcel data by all 99 Iowa counties. At one time when FAX machines were still relevant, some utilities opted to receive their locate notices from Iowa One Call via FAX. Today, the standard for sending locate notices to

the utilities is via electronic transmission, which provides a much more efficient and effective process over the now outdated FAX process. Converting FAX users to electronic transmissions was implemented at measured pace to account for any difficulties during the changeover and to ensure a seamless transition. During the phase-out, which began in early 2018 and was completed just after the first of 2019, Iowa One Call maintained communications with the affected utilities and provided ongoing support and training throughout the transition. Another significant achievement is the incorporating of county parcel data, from all 99 Iowa counties, into the NextGen electronic mapping system. When using the online ticketing system, users can create very precise and detailed map/descriptions, thanks in part to the added layer of detail that the parcel data provides. Getting counties to provide updated parcel data on a timely basis is not always an easy matter. Current state laws do not require counties to provide Iowa One Call with this data, and the task of obtaining the data is an ongoing endeavor that Iowa One Call undertakes with great resolution. Having obtained and incorporated parcel data from all 99 Iowa counties is a worthy achievement obtained by only a few state one call systems.

Staying ahead of the trends that impact productivity and efficiency is a key strategic objective of Iowa One Call. Updating and enhancing systems is an ongoing process at the call center where efficiency is critical to the end users' productivity. The reluctance by some stakeholders to embrace these system changes is understandable, but staying ahead of negative trends by maximizing new technologies requires today's stakeholders to embrace change.

The Schedule is Set for the 2020 Excavation Safety Awareness Program.

The ESAP program serves to educate contractors, facility operators and locators on any changes to the Iowa One Call system. We discuss best practices in the industry, any updates or changes being made to the system, review Iowa Code, and much more. In 2020, we will focus heavily on the importance of utilizing the Online Ticket Request System, mitigating locating delays, and promoting clear communication among all parties as an invaluable tool in the process. Last year, there were 3,051 registered attendees across our 17 meeting locations.

In years past, Iowa One Call has hosted our ESAP Meetings in January and February, which is known as the offseason for excavators and locators. This time

around, we scheduled our 2020 ESAP meetings for the months of January and March, skipping the month of February. This is largely due to extreme weather conditions that we experienced last February, causing our attendance to be much lower. We hope to avoid bad weather as much as possible, as our meetings are spread out across the state of Iowa. We do understand, however, that the winter weather can never be predicted in the Midwest.

Please review the schedule and register online [HERE](#). Registration is free and will close one week before the respective event. If you have questions, you may contact Tyler Jass at tylerjass@netins.net or 515-577-2368.

Excavation Safety Awareness Program

January

- 7 Johnston
- 8 Ames
- 14 Carroll
- 16 Ottumwa
- 21 Waterloo
- 23 Fort Dodge
- 29 Cedar Rapids
- 30 Riverside

March

- 10 Mason City
- 11 Decorah
- 17 Council Bluffs
- 18 Sioux City
- 19 Spencer
- 24 Bettendorf
- 25 Dubuque
- 26 Atlantic
- 31 Burlington

Mitigating Delays

A few years ago, making a phone to our call center, or dialing 811, was the easiest way to get a locate request completed. Now, with online being such a prevalent tool in today's society, filing a locate request online is actually the easier option. When calling-in your locate request ticket, the ticket is only as good as the information we receive. If the customer services representative (CSR) and the excavator are not understanding each other, it will likely result in a delay in the locating process, because we have to verify the information is accurate. If the contractor or excavator is unable to give the CSR detailed information, it typically results in over gridding. Over gridding in a heavily urban area, for example, could

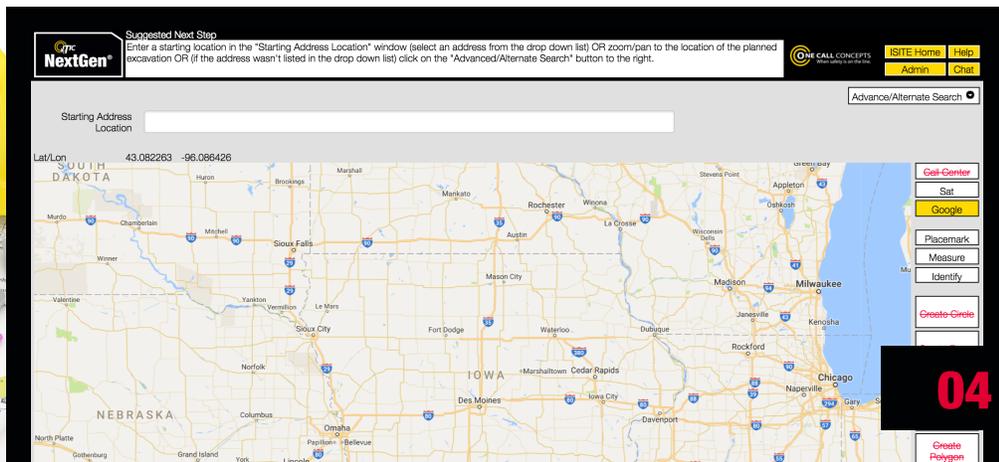
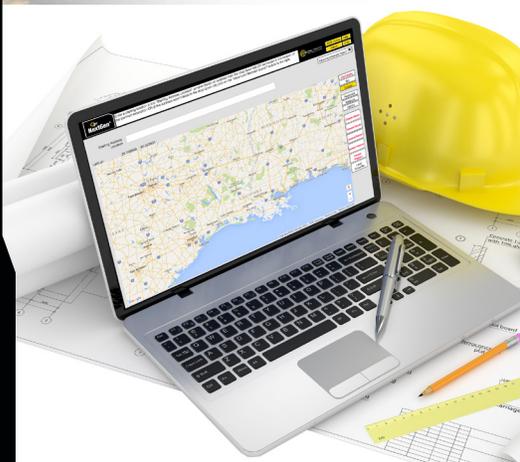
cover several blocks. This would then cause confusion to the locator, resulting in a lot more phone calls and a delay of projects.

By using the online tool, the contractor (or excavator) is able to pinpoint exactly where the excavation will occur, allowing the locator to efficiently do his job and mitigate delays in the process. The tools offered on our online request system are very user friendly and walk you through, step-by-step, the entire ticket request process. Utilizing the online tool allows excavators to effectively do their job, while making the lives of the locators much easier by providing as detailed information as possible.

NextGen® Overview

Our online ticket request system, in summary, is an invaluable tool for excavators, contractors and locators. The online tool allows an excavator to pinpoint exactly where the digging is going to take place. It also allows the excavator to specify where they need markings done, and send the ticket out. A big reason why online has become so heavily used over the years is the fact that it helps avoid over gridding. Over gridding is essentially marking a very broad area of planned excavation. This is one of the

biggest problems in the industry, causing miscommunication and contributing to many of the damaged utilities today. With the online tool, it allows you to create the ticket exactly how you need it to be. There are many different types of jobs, from large to very small. With the online ticket, you're able to create, for example, a circle with a radius specifically around where your digging will occur. No matter how large or how small your project may be, the online tool will allow you to lay out exactly where your digging will occur.



Joint Meet

Another frequently used tool is a Joint Meet. A Joint Meet with locators onsite, which is invaluable. In many cases, there may be two separate job sites, with two separate tickets. When trying to describe these job sites online or phone call, sometimes it is helpful to meet onsite and let the locator know exactly what the job entails and where the excavating is going occur in that specific day. As an example, a contractor may not be working in the entire area of the job site; they may be only working on the west side of the job site during that day. This tool of communication is a huge benefit to be able to establish that relationship with the locator to clarify exactly where the excavation is going to occur, and both parties can work out a plan of action.



JOBSITE 1

JOBSITE 2

Video shoot with Elder Corporation

Elder Corporation is one of the largest excavators in the Des Moines area, working on massive construction projects around the metro. Scott Lewis, Safety Director for Elder Corporation, and CJ Sherzan, helped out Iowa One Call this year by participating in our Excavation Safety Awareness video. Our video team was able to capture valuable footage of large construction projects that are in the works for Elder Corporation.

The main emphasis of our 2020 ESAP Presentation is to focus on the Online Ticket Request system through Iowa One Call, which allows for maximum efficiency in the locating process. The system offers various tools that allow the excavator to provide extremely specific information, versus trying to explain your project over the phone. In our video, CJ Sherzan attests to the value of the online ticket request system, as she is in charge of locate requests for ALL Elder Corporation jobs. In the video, CJ also

mentions some of the online features that she swears by, including the polygon tool, route tool and the parcel tool. This, CJ states, allows her to avoid over-gridding a project by providing specific information to declare exactly where their excavation will occur. With so many massive projects and time-sensitive jobs to manage, Elder Corporation is a prime example of how the online request tool through Iowa One Call is an invaluable resource that makes their lives much easier.

We are extremely grateful for Elder Corporation's willingness to participate in this year's Safety Awareness video. It allows us to convey real-life examples in the field that the contractors and locators can relate to. We at Iowa One Call take great pride in the production of our ESAP video each year, and it would truly not be possible without the participation of the excavating companies, locators, and underground facility operators.



Social Media Promotions

This year, we focused heavily on getting our followers engaged on our social media. A tactic that has worked great for us this year is Facebook giveaways. We ran a Facebook giveaway during the Iowa State Fair for a custom-built deck cooler, which garnered great interest from the public. We also ran a giveaway for the tree and shrub that will be featured in the new Iowa One Call commercial – which also generated a lot of buzz from the public. Lastly, in light of the Holiday season, we wanted to give back to our community by running a Holiday giveaway. The giveaway features a Mammoth Premium Grade Iowa

One Call Cooler. The cooler is loaded with various gifts, like an Iowa One Call traveler mug, a stainless steel Thermos koozie, mini shovel, and more (\$180 value). To enter for the chance to win, viewers were asked to comment on the post with their favorite Holiday tradition. The feedback from our followers was overwhelming, with 60 likes, 100 comments and 11 post shares. People were very eager to post about their favorite Holiday traditions. The winner of the cooler giveaway will be chosen on December 18, just in time for the Holidays.



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