IOWA ONE CALL℠ The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call Vol. 34. No. 3.

Excavator QUARTERLY



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WHAT'S UP BELOW

IOWA ONE CALL℠

MATCHING LOCATE REQUESTS TO THE PROGRESS OF EXCAVATION

Large construction projects present challenges that extend beyond submitting a locate request and waiting for underground facilities to be marked. Fiber overbuilds, utility replacements, road projects, and other long-term work may cover large areas and continue for weeks or months.

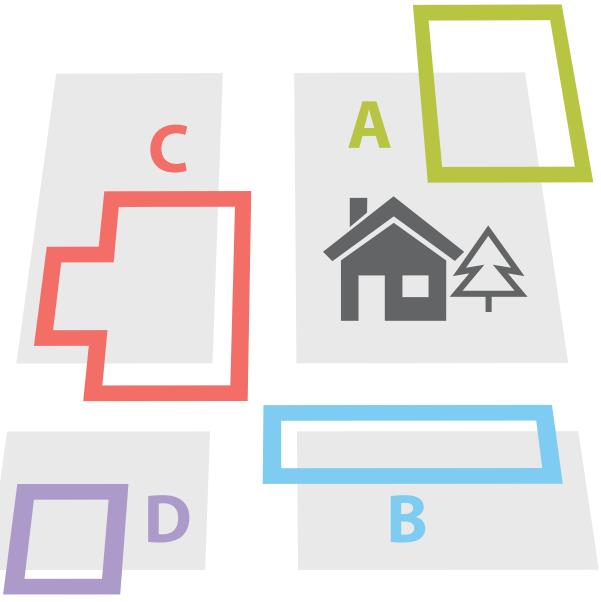
In these situations, effective coordination can be just as important to damage prevention as compliance with One Call requirements. The objective is straightforward: whenever practical, locating activity should correspond as closely as possible with the actual progression of excavation.

LARGE PROJECTS REQUIRE A DIFFERENT APPROACH

A contractor working on a small, defined excavation generally knows where the work will begin and when it will occur. A contractor installing several miles of fiber faces a different situation. The overall project area may be extensive, while crews are actively excavating within only a portion of that area at any given time.

Providing advance notice is beneficial and can give locators additional time to complete their work. However, the challenge occurs when locators must mark extensive areas that may not be excavated for days or sometimes weeks, requiring them to commit time and resources that could be better utilized in areas where excavation will occur more immediately. Not to mention the increasing likelihood that markings will deteriorate before excavation begins. This can create additional challenges because excavators are responsible for preserving the markings, and deteriorated markings may require additional locator resources to remark the area.

A more effective and recommended approach is for excavators to match their locate requests to the anticipated progression of the work by breaking large projects into more manageable work areas. When practical, the project can be organized into logical phases or zones. Rather than treating an extensive project as one continuous work area, the excavator can identify where crews expect to work and communicate how the project will progress. For example, an excavator might advise locators:



"Crews will be working in Zones **A** and **B** today and tomorrow. We expect to move into Zones **C** and **D** on Thursday."

That information is valuable to a locator. It establishes priorities and provides a clearer picture of where markings will actually be needed. For the excavator, the benefit is equally important. Better coordination can reduce locating delays, help ensure markings are completed closer to the time they are needed, and reduce the likelihood that crews arrive at a work area with incomplete, faded, or outdated markings.

IOWA ONE CALL'S ELECTRONIC JOINT MEET

For large, complicated, or ongoing projects that may extend over a longer period of time, Iowa One Call's Electronic Joint Meet notice provides a structured way to accomplish this coordination. The Electronic Joint Meet is an online process available through Iowa One Call's electronic ticket-entry System—accessible at iowaonecall.com—and is initiated by the excavator rather than through a call center operator. Using the process, an excavator can establish a "Parent Ticket" identifying the overall project area, which can then be divided into individual geographic tickets or work areas. This allows a large or ongoing project to be viewed and managed in smaller, more practical sections.

The excavator can also provide supporting information such as project maps, plans, photographs, and other documents that help operators and locators understand the proposed work. This creates an important distinction: the Parent Ticket provides the overall project envelope, while the individual areas provide a practical way to manage where excavation—and therefore locating—will occur as the project progresses.

Instead of simply communicating that a contractor will be working across a large area, the excavator can provide more useful information: Where are the crews now? Where are they going next? When are they expected to get there? That level of information helps everyone plan.

MEET IN THE FIELD

The Joint Meet process also provides an opportunity for excavators and locators to meet on site before or during a project. For complex work, a map and ticket description may not provide all the information needed to proceed effectively with the locating and marking process.

Meeting at the jobsite allows the excavator to show the locator the proposed route, discuss construction methods, identify areas of concern, and explain how the work is expected to progress. The locator can then identify issues that may affect locating and discuss underground facilities that require particular attention. A relatively short field meeting can eliminate assumptions that otherwise may lead to confusion and delays.

KEEP THE COMMUNICATION GOING

Coordination should not necessarily end when the Joint Meet concludes. Once the appropriate excavator and locator personnel have met, exchanging contact information can make continued



coordination much easier. An on-site foreman, project superintendent, or designated coordinator can provide updates as work progresses and communicate directly with the locator(s) when circumstances change. For example:

- A crew progresses faster than anticipated
- Weather delays work in one area
- The contractor changes the order in which work zones will be completed
- A locator needs clarification about the excavation area
- An unexpected field condition requires additional coordination

The Joint Meet system is an excellent tool for establishing this relationship, but excavators can also develop their own methods for maintaining effective communication with locators throughout a project. Direct field communication should supplement—not replace—the required Iowa One Call notification and response processes. Its purpose is to make those processes work more effectively.

WHY THIS BENEFITS THE EXCAVATOR

Good communication with locators is not simply a courtesy—it can directly benefit the excavator by helping reduce locating delays and allowing sufficient time for locators to safely and effectively complete the locating and marking needed for the project. Locate markings are an essential tool for protecting excavation crews and reducing potential liability, particularly where underground facilities are complex, difficult to identify, potentially hazardous, and costly if damaged during excavation, which may expose the excavator to significant liability.



Providing locators with adequate time and clear information helps support thorough and effective locating and marking and gives excavators greater confidence that the markings they rely on are in place when work begins. Ultimately, this supports safer excavation, fewer unnecessary delays, and a more efficient project from start to finish.

COORDINATION IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Excavators need timely and accurate locates so work can proceed safely and efficiently. Facility operators need their underground infrastructure protected, and locators need sufficient time and information to understand the work and carry out their responsibilities effectively. Those interests are not in conflict—they support the same objective: safe excavation, damage prevention, and efficient project completion. On large or ongoing projects, that means damage prevention requires more than simply asking, “Has the locate request been submitted?” It also requires asking, “Does everyone involved understand where excavation is occurring now—and where it is going next?”

Tools such as Iowa One Call’s Electronic Joint Meet provide an effective way to establish that coordination, but the process is most effective when communication continues as the project progresses. When locating activity can reasonably follow the actual progression of excavation, contractors are less likely to encounter unnecessary delays, locators are better able to manage their responsibilities, and excavation crews are more likely to have the markings and information they need when they arrive at the work area.

Effective damage prevention depends on more than compliance with the basic requirements of the One Call process. It depends on planning, communication and a shared commitment to ensuring that locating and excavation work together as effectively as possible. When that occurs, the result is not simply more efficient locating—it’s safer excavation and better damage prevention.

IOWA ONE CALL AT THE 2026 IOWA STATE FAIR

RECORD CROWDS, RECORD FUN

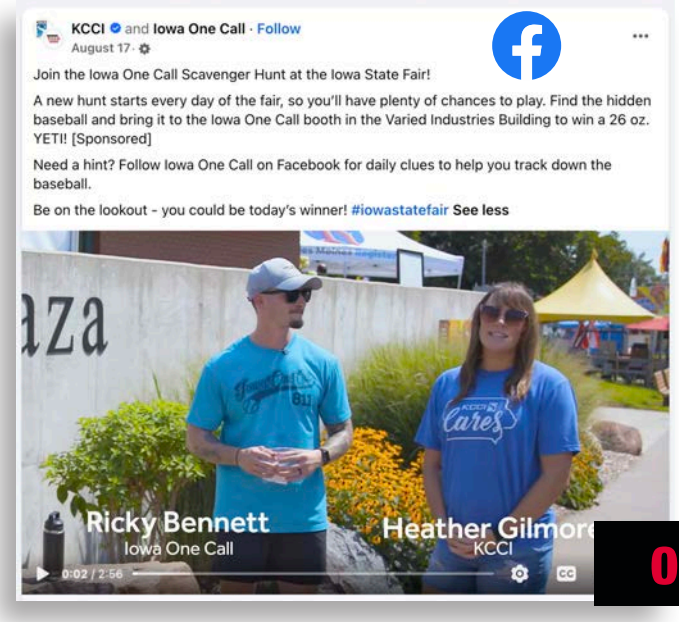
If you were anywhere near the fairgrounds this August, you already know this wasn't just another year at the Iowa State Fair. And before we get into it, we know that every year we say, "this one was for the books." But this year, we mean it and the numbers back it up. **1,218,834** people came through those gates, shattering the previous attendance record set in 2024, along with several other records. Somehow Iowa's biggest event got even bigger, and Iowa One Call was front and center the whole way.

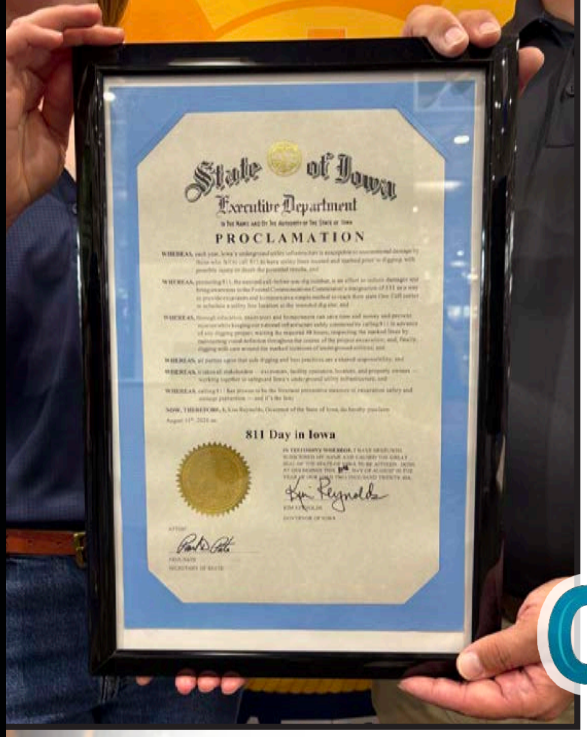
We once again set up shop in the Varied Industries Building, which by now feels like a home away from home. The routine was the same: hand out promo items, talk to fairgoers about safe digging practices, and listen to some wild stories. Some we would have rather not heard… if you know, you know.





What wasn't so familiar this year was our scavenger hunt. Somewhere on the fairgrounds each weekday, we hid an Iowa One Call baseball squishy with a note attached. Whoever found it brought it to our booth in the Varied Industries Building and walked away with an IOC Yeti water bottle. Fairgoers following us on Facebook and Instagram got hints throughout the day to help narrow the search. A small addition, but it worked exactly the way we hoped—it got people active and engaged.





The fair also gave us a backdrop for something much bigger than a booth. The Iowa Utilities Commission, the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association, Common Ground Iowa, and the Iowa Attorney General's Office all joined us in celebrating the governor's signing of this year's 811 Day Proclamation, formally recognizing August 11 as a day dedicated to safe digging awareness across the state, an annual tradition that we couldn't be prouder of. And we will always be grateful for the collective teamwork and support of the largest players in damage prevention in the state of Iowa.

OVER 1 MILLION



We can't forget our fair sponsorship partners at KCCI. Every weekday, right after their live news segment at the MidAmerican Energy Stage, we ran our giveaways. TZhis year, the crowds were bigger than we've ever seen. It's become one of our favorite traditions of fair season, and the energy out there never disappoints.

IowaStateFair



Eleven days. **Over a million people.** And, once again, proof that Iowans show up when you need them to. Thanks to everyone who stopped by this year. See you next August!

IOWA ONE CALL

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.

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

App Store

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



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

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

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

National Excavator Initiative
Safety always.

www.safeexcavator.com

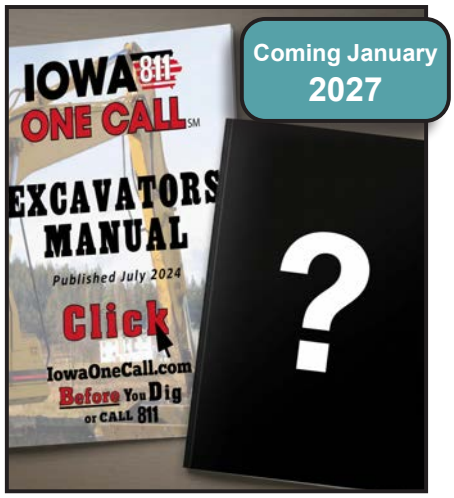
811 Know what's **below.** **811** before you dig.

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.

UPDATED EXCAVATORS MANUAL COMING JANUARY 2027

Iowa One Call is undertaking a comprehensive revision of its Excavators Manual and has set a target release date of January 1, 2027.



The revision involves a full review of the manual's current content evaluated against present-day industry standards. Iowa Code Chapter 480 will continue to govern the substance of the manual, but the material is being reorganized for improved clarity and usability, making it easier for excavators to locate and apply the information they need.

The updated manual will also incorporate industry best practices developed in collaboration with other damage prevention organizations reflecting input beyond Iowa One Call alone.

In addition, Iowa One Call will publish a Spanish-language version of the manual alongside the English edition, expanding access to safe digging information for excavators statewide.

Additional details will be shared as the project progresses. Excavators and stakeholders should watch for updates in upcoming newsletters.

IOWA LICA OPENS NEW EDUCATION SPACE AT MARSHALL COUNTY FARM

Iowa One Call's longtime partner, Iowa Land Improvement Contractors of America (ILICA), recently celebrated the opening of a new classroom and meeting facility at its 80-acre demonstration farm near Melbourne. The space gives ILICA room to host and educate farmers, landowners, contractors, lawmakers, and other government officials interested in soil and water conservation.

The farm itself has been a working showcase since 2000, featuring drainage systems, bioreactors, saturated buffers, wetlands, terraces, sediment control basins, and other edge-of-field practices built by ILICA members. Together, those systems filter out roughly half the phosphates and nearly all the nitrates from runoff across a watershed of more than 1,000 acres—a real-world representation of the potential conservation infrastructure could have at scale.



It also serves as a reminder that safe digging and land conservation often go hand in hand: any of this underground work—bioreactors, buried tile lines, etc.—starts with a locate request.

Congrats to our good friends at ILICA on the new space!

REMINDERS

2026 ESAP WEBINAR ON TICKET TALK – DECEMBER 1, 2026

This year's ESAP webinar lands on December 1, 2026, and it's all about Ticket Talk, Iowa One Call's new two-way communication system.

Ticket Talk changes how locators and excavators communicate on a ticket. Instead of playing phone tag or hoping an email gets seen, updates happen directly within the system itself. The webinar will walk you through how it works and what it means for your day-to-day process.

Registration will open October 1, 2026. Watch for the sign-up link, and get ready to see how Ticket Talk fits into your workflow.

2027 IOWA EXCAVATION SAFETY SUMMIT – JANUARY 28, 2027 (REGISTRATION NOW OPEN)

The Excavation Safety Summit is back for its third year, and it's shaping up to be the biggest one yet. Mark your calendar for January 28, 2027, at the Iowa State Fairgrounds' Varied Industries Building.

Registration is open for attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors. If you're planning to exhibit or sponsor this year, don't wait too long—opportunities are going fast.

Whether you're coming to learn, network, or show off what your organization brings to the industry, this is the one to be at. We'll have more details on sessions and speakers in the coming months. For now, get registered and make sure you save the date!

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR 2026 EXCAVATOR AND LOCATOR OF THE YEAR

Know someone who's raised the bar for safe digging in Iowa this year? Now's your chance to give them the recognition they've earned.

Nominations are open for both Excavator of the Year and Locator of the Year. If you've worked alongside someone who consistently gets it right—clear communication, careful practices, a real commitment to protecting underground infrastructure—put their name forward.

Submit your nomination here: Nomination Form

Don't sit on this one—get your nomination in!



IN THE NEWS

Local Excavation and Safety News From Around the Web

IUC issues order opening safety investigation into Black Hills Energy

iuc.iowa.gov

The Iowa Utilities Commission (IUC) has opened a comprehensive investigation to review Black Hills Energy's (Black Hills) compliance with state and federal pipeline safety regulations across Iowa. The decision follows a June 2025 inspection of Black Hills' Spencer Unit, which includes natural gas pipelines in 18 communities in northwest Iowa. IUC inspectors identified more than 100 safety issues spanning 16 violation categories... **[Learn More]**

Economic Impact Study: Damage to Underground Utility Lines Costs Iowans Roughly $169.2 Million Every Year

commongroundalliance.com

A study from the Common Ground Alliance finds Iowa experiences more than 1,664 damages to underground utility lines every year, which can cause service outages from emergency responders and businesses and lead to property damage and personal injury. The study finds Iowans lose $13 dollars to those costs for every one dollar spent on repairs to underground utility lines, resulting in $169.2 million dollars a year on average... **[Learn More]**



www.IOWAONECALL.com

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