

**IOWA 811**


**ONE CALL** SM The Official Newsletter of Iowa One Call

**Vol. 27, No. 2.**

# Excavator

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# WHAT'S UP BELOW



## Iowa's White-Lining Law

### Farming/Ranching Not Exempted

In 2014, “white-lining” – the process of premarking an area of proposed excavation with white paint, white flags, white stakes, or a combination thereof – became a legal requirement of Iowa Code chapter 480 (the “Iowa One Call law”). The law became effective July 1, 2014, and applies to anyone planning to engage in digging/excavating operations, including Iowa’s farming and ranching communities. The law originated as House Study Bill (HSBS518), introduced to the Iowa Legislature during the 2014 Iowa Legislative Session by Iowa One Call in an effort to improve communications between excavators and field locating technicians.



The expansion of the underground facilities infrastructure is ongoing due to the increasing needs of society, as is the ongoing need for continued excavating operations by the building and construction trades, farming and ranching communities, and the utilities industry. As the underground facilities infrastructure continues to grow, so does the potential for “utility conflicts,” which are a common issue for excavators in both urban and rural settings. In fact, urban expansion directly impacts the expansion of underground facilities in rural areas. Increased demand for natural gas and liquid fuels impacts

the demand for how those energy resources are transported – typically via transmission pipelines that traverse Iowa’s rural farmlands. The same is true regarding the exponential demand and expansion of the fiber optic communications industry. Avoiding these growing conflicts is key to damage prevention, and fundamental to safeguarding life, health and essential services.

**“ The practice of white-lining by excavators has been shown to expedite the locating and marking process and decrease excavation-related damages. ”**

The locating and marking of underground facilities by the utilities (underground facility operators) in advance of any proposed excavation, is crucial to minimizing utility conflicts and maximizing damage prevention. Critical to the process is the quality of the information conveyed between an excavator and the utilities (i.e., utility locating technicians). The practice of white-lining has a long history within the one call industry and has been a recommended best practice of the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) since the organization’s inception in the year 2000. When a locating technician arrives onsite to locate and mark an area of the proposed excavation, that “locator” must determine where the proposed excavation is to occur based on the information provided by the excavator in the original locate notice. Unless the descriptive information in the locate notice is detailed, precise, and conveys a comprehensive overview of the proposed excavation, a locator may have difficulty discerning just where it is the excavator is planning to excavate. The practice of white-lining by excavators has been shown to expedite the locating and

marking process and decrease excavation-related damages. The 1997 safety study “Protecting Public Safety through Excavation Damage Prevention” by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) reached the conclusion that premarking is a practice that helps prevent excavation damage. Deciphering a locate notice is a much easier process for locators when premarkings have been applied as a visual reference.

The benefits of white-lining extend beyond expediting the locating and marking process and can help excavators avoid ‘downtime’ as a result of locating delays. When a locator is unable to determine where the proposed excavation is to occur adequately, the locator may status the locate notice as “not marked, inadequate information.” In the event this happens, the locator will contact the excavator to coordinate the necessary preconditions required before the locating and marking can be completed; and in many instances, the precondition will be white-lining.

There are three statutory exceptions to the mandatory white-lining requirement. Iowa Code chapter 480.4(1)e states that:

At the time of giving notice to the notification center pursuant to this subsection, an excavator shall use white paint, white flags, white stakes, or a combination thereof, to mark the proposed area of excavation, unless one of the following applies:

- (1) The precise location, direction, size, and length of the proposed excavation area can be clearly and adequately defined and described during the call to the notification center or during an onsite preconstruction meeting.
- (2) Electronic means of white-lining is supported by the notification center and used by the excavator.
- (3) Physical premarking can be shown to be impractical.

The easiest way to break this down for Iowa’s agricultural community is to begin with the definition of “excavation” and “normal farming operations” because some – but not all – agricultural operations are exempt. Iowa Code chapter 480.1(4/6) states that:

- 4.) “Excavation” means an operation in which a structure or earth, rock, or other material in or on the ground is moved, removed, or compressed, or otherwise displaced by means of any tools, equipment, or explosives and includes but is not limited to grading, trenching, tiling, digging, ditching, drilling, augering, tunneling, scraping, cable or pipe plowing, driving, and demolition of structures.

“Excavation” does not include normal farming operations, residential, commercial, or similar gardening, the opening of a grave site in a cemetery, normal activities involved in land surveying pursuant to chapter

542B, operations in a solid waste disposal site which has planned for underground facilities, the replacement of an existing traffic sign at its current location and at no more than its current depth, and normal road or highway maintenance which does not change the original grade of the roadway or the ditch.



### Examples

#### Normal Farming Operations

- Plowing
- Cultivation
- Planting
- Harvesting

#### Operations that Require 811

- Chisel plowing
- Sub-soiling
- Drain tile excavation
- Terracing
- Anything over 15” in depth



6.) “Normal farming operations” means plowing, cultivation, planting, harvesting, and similar operations routine to most farms, but excludes chisel plowing, sub-soiling, or ripping more than fifteen inches in depth, drain tile excavating, terracing, digging or driving a post in a new location other than replacing a post while repairing a fence in its existing location, and similar operations.

## In Summary

Operations other than plowing, cultivating, planting, harvesting and similar operations routine to most farms will require prior notice to Iowa One Call, and all operations that will penetrate the soil 15-inches or more will require prior notice to Iowa One Call.

If the locate notice clearly and adequately describes the precise location, direction, size, and length of the proposed excavation white-lining may not be required. The best way to achieve this is to use the Iowa One Call online ticketing system, “ITIC,” to create electronic locate notices. The ITIC system provides users with precision mapping tools that, when used properly, can convey precise mapping/descriptive information. The ITIC system, when used properly, can provide “electronic means of white-lining” – which may satisfy the statutory exception as stated in the Iowa Code (when “electronic means of white-lining is supported by the notification center and used by the excavator”).



The screenshot displays the ITIC NextGen interface. On the left, there is a form for 'EXCAVATION INFORMATION' and 'LOCATION INFORMATION'. The location information includes: COUNTY: SCOTT, CITY: PLEASANT VALLEY, ADDRESS #: 5382, DIG STREET: CLEMONS RD, and NEAREST INTERSECTING STREET: MOENCKS RD. Below this, 'MARKING INSTRUCTIONS' are provided. On the right, a satellite map shows a blue line representing the excavation route with four numbered points. A 'PROFILE' button is visible above the map. The top of the page shows 'Ticket A' and 'Ticket B' tabs, and a 'Suggested Next Step' section.

<p><b>MARKING INSTRUCTIONS</b></p>	<p>The excavation route is located in the lot at 5382 CLEMONS RD. The first point is located approximately 595 feet SE from the westernmost corner of the lot. Starting at this point (point 1), proceed approximately 195 feet ENE to point 2; from that point approximately 115 feet NE to point 3; from that point approximately 110 feet E to point 4. The excavation takes place within a 15 foot width of the points in the route.</p> <p>Point 1: Lat:41.5596289 Long: -90.4578986                  Point 2: Lat:41.5599099 Long: -90.4572898                  Point 3: Lat:41.5601367 Long: -90.4569948                  Point 4: Lat:41.5601447 Long: -90.4565871</p>
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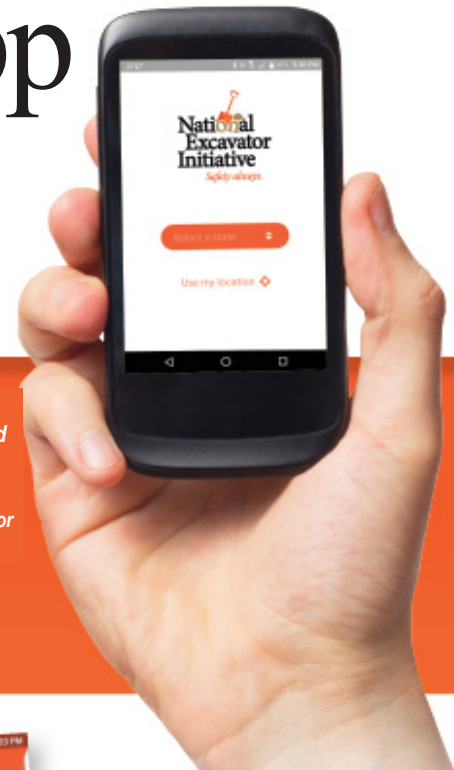
If physically premarking the area of proposed excavation can be shown to be impractical, then alternative arrangements shall be coordinated between the locator and the excavator, and may include pre-excavation meetings or “joint meets” (when an excavator and a locator can meet onsite to discuss the proposed excavation), or other arrangements agreed upon between the locator/underground facility operator and the excavator. The locator or a representative of the underground facility operator will contact the excavator to coordinate the necessary arrangements. Placing white stakes at designated intervals for large areas may be sufficient, when combined with adequate supplemental descriptive information, and can be discussed between the locator and the excavator.

For more information, please visit [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com)





# 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:

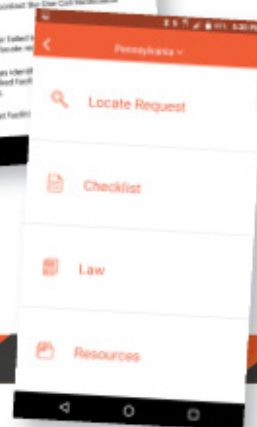
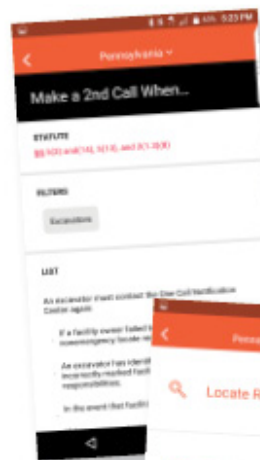
- ▼ Advance notice or wait time
- ▼ Pre-marking ('whiteline')
- ▼ 811 ticket information
- ▼ Names of local enforcement agencies and 811 call centers, also connecting you electronically to submit a locate request
- ▼ Includes safe digging tips + checklist

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](http://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.





# WHAT IS A PRIVATE FACILITY?

Iowa law requires underground facility operators to register their underground facilities with the Iowa One Call system, and while the law defines what an operator is, and what underground facilities are, the law does not define what constitutes a private facility. In order to better understand what a private facility is, one must look to the legal definitions of “operator” and “underground facility.”

Per Iowa Code chapter 480:

“**Underground facility** means an item of personal property owned or leased by the operator which is buried or placed below ground for use in connection with the storage or conveyance of, or the provision of services supplying water, sewage, electronic, telephonic, or telegraphic communications, electric energy, hazardous liquids, or petroleum products including natural gas or other substances, and includes but is not limited to pipes, sewers, conduits, cables, valves, lines, wires, manholes, and attachments to such property but does not include sanitary sewer laterals, storm sewer laterals, and water service lines providing service to abutting private properties.”

Because the law specifically excludes sanitary and storm sewer laterals, and water service lines to abutting private properties, one can ascertain that these items are private facilities.

In defining what an “operator” is Iowa Code chapter 480 provides a much broader, yet less defined exclusion:

“**Operator** means a person owning or operating an underground facility including but not limited to public, private, and municipal utilities. An operator does not include a person who owns or otherwise lawfully occupies real property where an underground facility is located only for the use and benefit of the owner or occupant on the property.”

The key here is the real property that must be owned or legally occupied. Basically, private parties own private property where private facilities may be buried. Public property cannot be owned by private parties and therefore facilities buried on/under public property (owned by the citizens/county/state of Iowa or federal government, etc.) must be registered as “underground facilities” – e.g., buried facilities located in the public right-of-way, under public streets, highways, freeways, thoroughfares, city owned land, etc.

Excavators must understand that commercial businesses are typically privately owned, and likely include at least some private facilities. When working on or near commercial businesses, excavators must be aware of ‘demarcation points’ – the transition point where an incoming “underground facility” (owned and maintained by a utility provider) become a “private facility” (owned and maintained by the property/business owner) – typically at meters or transformers that are located away from the commercial building. Excavators must always be aware of their surroundings and keep an eye out for any indicators that private facilities may be present, especially for any transformers, meters, pedestals, buried



## THINGS TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR

- Transformers
- Meters
- Pedestals
- Buried vaults, etc.



vaults, etc. that may be located away from a commercial building/structure but in direct proximity to a planned excavation. Excavators should always contact property owners (commercial or private) prior to commencing with any excavation project in order to discuss and plan for private facilities.

Just as excavators must be aware of demarcation/transition points – where underground facilities become private facilities – so must private facility owners be aware of transition points where private facilities become underground facilities. An example of this would be a commercial manufacturing company that owns and maintains production plants on two different sides of a highway, and where the two plants are ‘tied’ together by a shared buried gas or electric line. Any portion of said gas or electric line that runs under the highway – which is public and therefore not owned or occupied by the commercial manufacturing company – would need to be registered as an underground facility.

Typically, in residential settings, an underground facility operator’s demarcation point is at the meter located on the customers’ home. This is why most underground facilities on residential properties are located up to the home. On rural properties, where meters are typically located away from the homestead, the portion of buried lines running from a meter to the homestead would likely be considered as private facilities. Privately installed/buried facilities, such as secondary electric lines located on residential properties (e.g., running from a house to a detached garage) or on rural properties (e.g., running from between various outbuildings and/or grain driers, etc.) would be considered as private facilities. There may be multiple types of private facilities located on any given residential or rural property. Residential properties may include various items such as irrigation lines, invisible pet fences, secondary electric lines and/or secondary gas lines (e.g.: to a gas grill). This is why it is essential that excavators establish communications with all land/property owners prior to commencing with any excavation activities.

## PRIVATE FACILITIES

### What Does NOT Get Marked?

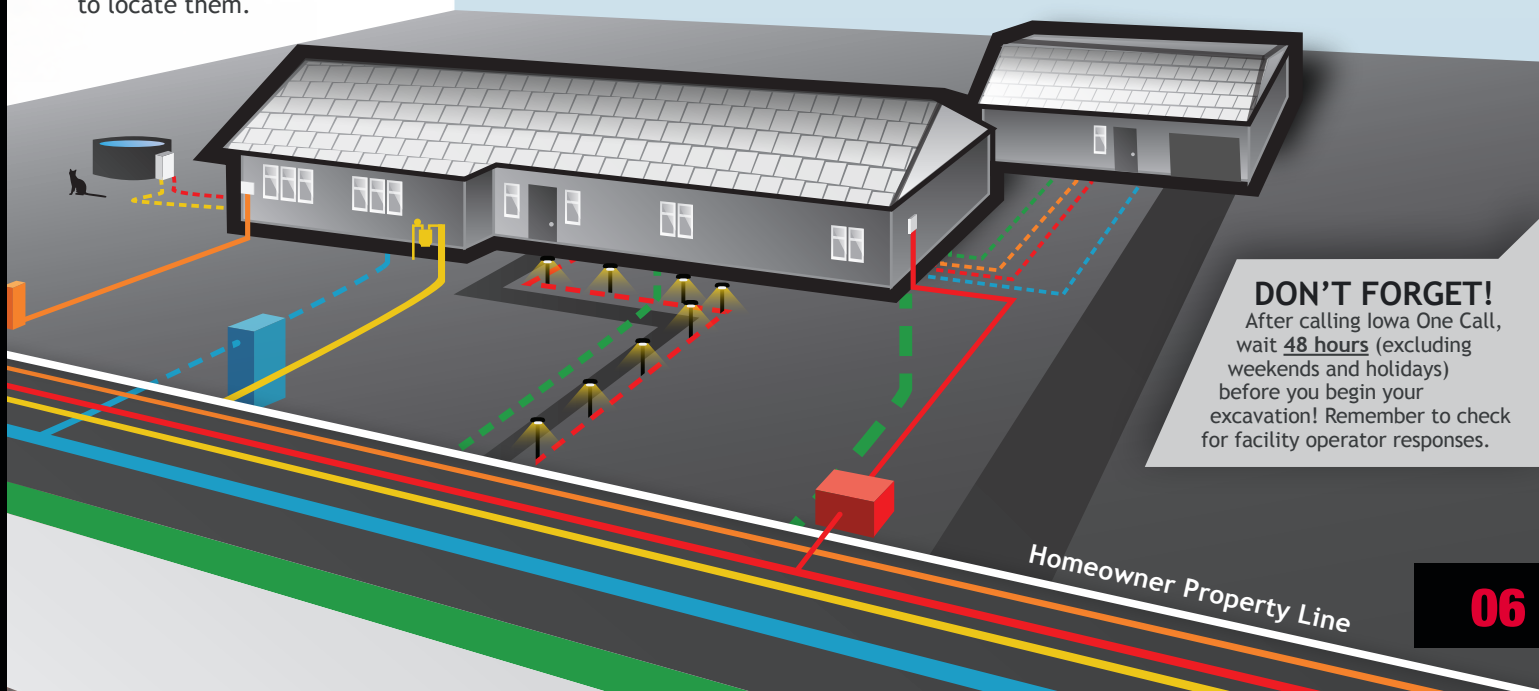
Private underground facilities, such as private utility lines and private distribution networks, do not get marked by facility operators. When a property owner or tenant has any type of private underground facility, they are responsible to locate those facilities or hire someone to locate them.

- ELECTRIC
- GAS, OIL, AND PROPANE
- PHONE AND CABLE
- WATER
- SEWER

Customer-owned lines usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills.

The free locating service available through Iowa One Call applies **ONLY** to public facility operators. The diagram below shows a variety of utilities, some owned by the utility and some by the homeowner.

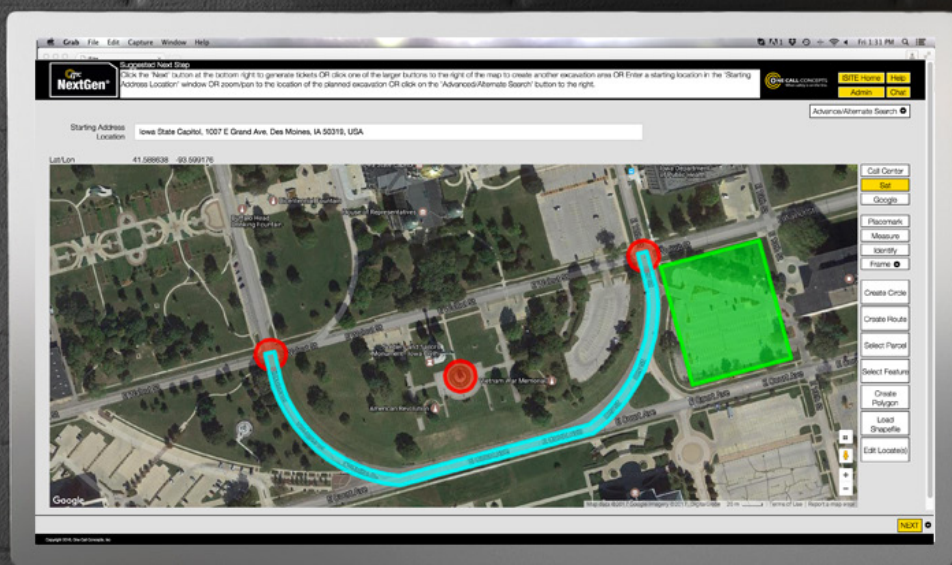
Those utilities marked by dotted lines are typically owned by the property owner. Those lines will **NOT** be marked by contacting Iowa One Call. Private locating services will mark these for a fee.



**DON'T FORGET!**  
After calling Iowa One Call, wait **48 hours** (excluding weekends and holidays) before you begin your excavation! Remember to check for facility operator responses.



# 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.





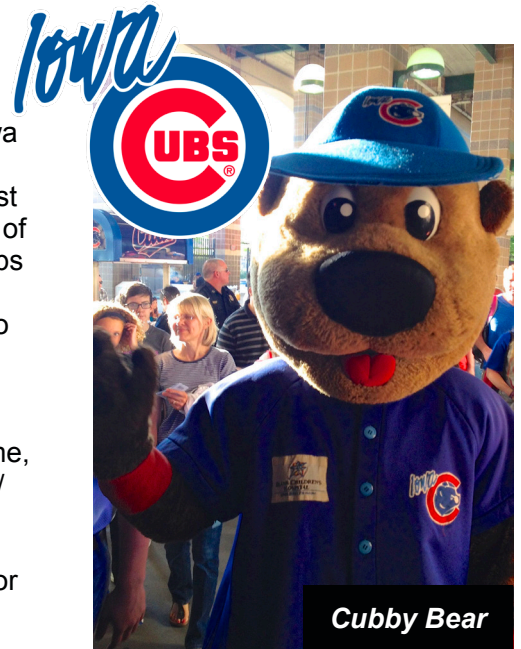
# IOWA ONE CALL TO CELEBRATE 811-DAY AT THE BALLPARK

**(August 11th is 811-Day)**

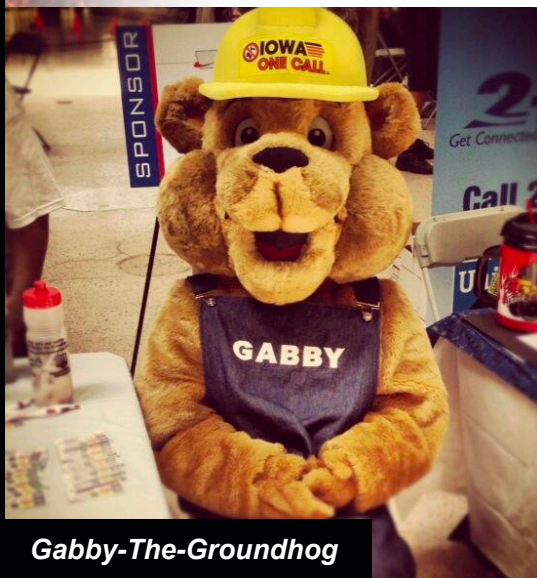
On Sunday, August 11th Iowa One Call will partner with the Iowa Cubs franchise to celebrate “811-Day.” Iowa One Call’s very own Gabby-The-Groundhog will be on hand to throw out the first pitch and to greet the public. The date also marks the birthday of Cubby Bear, the Iowa Cubs beloved mascot. While Gabby helps Cubby celebrate his birthday, the two will spend time greeting fans and reminding everyone to “dig safe” by calling 811 prior to commencing with any projects that will entail digging.

As part of the promotion, Iowa One Call (IOC) will have a kiosk set up inside one of the main gates, prior to and during the game, where IOC representatives will provide educational information/literature about underground damage prevention and safe excavating practices, as well as a multitude of promotional (811 reminders) materials, including 811 baseball T-shirts, refrigerator magnets, pens and pencils and more!

811 is the national abbreviated dialing system established by the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) and put into effect across the United States in 2005 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The system allows persons from any state to simply dial 8-1-1 in order to be connected with their state’s one call damage prevention system.



**Cubby Bear**



**Gabby-The-Groundhog**

Iowa One Call, as an advocate and supporter of the CGA and the CGA’s “Recommended Best Practices” for safe excavating and damage prevention, has been a long-time promoter of the 811 abbreviated dialing system and continues to develop and participate in 811 promotional activities like the 811-Day celebration with the Iowa Cubs. The new emphasis, however, is on the electronic ticketing system, a process that provides users with greater flexibility and control over how they create and manage their locate tickets. The online ticketing system allows users to create their own locate tickets and provides a variety of cutting-edge features, such as the precision electronic mapping tool, which provides users with highly accurate advanced geo-mapping capabilities for the precise mapping of proposed excavation sites. Whereas the “call before you dig” message was once the championing call for state one call centers, the emphasis today, especially in Iowa, is “click before you dig.” As of June of this year, 73-percent of all of the locate notices sent to Iowa One Call have been created electronically via the online ticketing system.

As online ticketing surpasses the telephone-based ‘dial-up’ process, there will still be a place for 811. The 811 system, in its time vastly more efficient than the toll-free dialing systems, with all of the national and regional promotional and educational exposure generated, has played a significant and valuable role in the one call industry, and in safeguarding lives and essential services.

**The championing call today: “Click or call 811” before you dig!**

# IN THE NEWS



*Local Excavation and Safety News From Around the Web*



## **Dakota Access proposes increasing oil flow through Iowa**

[www.weareiowa.com](http://www.weareiowa.com)

Dakota Access has proposed increasing the amount of oil that flows through its pipeline across Iowa by altering the pump station near Cambridge, IA in Story County. They say that they need no further approval from the Iowa Utilities Board, but Bold Iowa disagrees. They filed a response to the IUB requesting a hearing in Story County ... [\[more\]](#)

## **Rep. Speier Reintroduces Legislation to Hold PHMSA Accountable for Safety Failures**

[speier.house.gov](http://speier.house.gov)

Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA) reintroduced legislation to hold the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) accountable for lapses in pipeline safety oversight. The PHMSA Accountability Act would restore the rights of private citizens to seek an injunction against PHMSA to force it to perform pipeline safety duties ... [\[more\]](#)

# IOWA 811

# ONE CALL

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[www.IOWAONECALL.com](http://www.IOWAONECALL.com)

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