



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
OPEN SESSION  
November 15, 2017**

Members Present:

Alicia Berger	Phil Lesnar
Jodi Corrow	Keith Novy
Chris Fry	Ray Starr
Tom Hoffman	Joe Thill
Dave Hunstad, Chair	Patrick Warden
Adam Kramer	Bruce West
	Ward Westphal

Counsel present:

Dean E. Parker, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP  
Kevin Moore, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP (for closed session)

Guests (for open session):

Mike Mendiola, MnOps  
Jon Wolfgram, MnOps

Guests (for Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (“MERC”) presentation):

Ian Marsh, Lockridge, Grindahl & Nauen LLP  
Amber Lee, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs  
John Padalino, Area Manager  
Danny Quint, Compliance Supervisor

Guests (for One Call Concepts (“OCC”) presentation and open session):

Adam Franco, Director of Operations, OCC  
Kimberly Boyd, General Manager Minnesota, OCC

On November 15, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Gopher State One Call offices, 1110 Centre Pointe Curve, Suite 100, Mendota Heights, Minnesota, the Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Chair, Dave Hunstad. Roll call was taken and a quorum was determined to be present. Dean Parker was asked to act as recording secretary.

The meeting commenced in open session.



## **MERC Farm Tap Project**

Dave Hunstad welcomed all in attendance and noted his appreciation to the Board for a high level of attendance.

Dave Hunstad introduced the MERC representatives and asked that Amber Lee provide an overview of MERC as well as the proposed Farm Tap Project. Amber Lee advised that MERC's serves approximately 230,000 customers in Minnesota, spread throughout the State. Its predecessors could be traced back to the 1930s. It is currently a part of WEC, a Wisconsin based energy organization.

When Northern Natural Gas installed interstate lines in the 1930s through the 1950s it often gave a direct tap to land owners in exchange for an easement. MERC has acted as a billing agent for Northern Natural Gas by contract for roughly 30 years. Those contractual arrangements are ending for Northern Natural Gas in Minnesota and 9 other regions. Many of these farm tap lines are not locatable. Some lines are very long, up to 5,000 feet according to Ms. Lee. MERC has applied to replace these customer owned lines with utility owned lines which would be locatable and regulated. This would address a significant safety issue as there has been a question as to whether farm tap lines in Minnesota have been properly maintained and whether they were always being located in connection with nearby excavations.

MERC has received approval for the scoping and design phase of this proposed project. MERC plans to start construction in 2019 if regulatory approvals are given. MERC is requesting the Minnesota Public Utility Commission ("PUC") allow recovery of the extensive costs from customers. MERC has suggested costs of those improvements be spread across the entire MERC customer base. The feeling is that upgrading these farm tap lines to currently applicable federal and state standards would be too expensive to spread across only the 1,700 farm tap users. PUC is looking for public input on this issue. According to Ms. Lee, some commissioners have suggested that perhaps the farm tap users should be paying a larger proportion of the cost. There will be at least 10 public hearings according to Ms. Lee, so that there will be ample opportunity for public input.

After some questions and discussion, the Board indicated it is generally supportive of the project in concept, although it would take no position on cost allocation. The consensus was that having locatable infrastructure where a facility operator has locating responsibility rather than a farm owner would be a step forward in safety.



## **Chair's Report**

Dave Hunstad gave a brief overview of the meeting, indicating there would be more discussion encouraging professionalism in the locator and excavator industries, among other things.

## **Approval of Board Minutes**

Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Board approved the Board meeting minutes for the August 15, 2017 Board meeting. Dave Hunstad directed that the open session minutes which have been previously placed on the website in draft form be declared final.

## **Appreciation Day for CSRs**

The Board previously discussed the importance of demonstrating appreciation for GSOC's customer service representatives (CSRs) on a more personal level. Dave Hunstad thanked Alicia Berger, Keith Novy and Ward Westphal for serving a buffet lunch for all notification center CSRs as part of customer appreciation week at the notification center. The luncheon was very well received by the employees, with many remarking to management they were impressed that members of the Board were willing to come and serve them.

Dave Hunstad also noted his appreciation for Board members taking time to attend the fall OCC Users Group Conference. Pat Warden felt it was a real opportunity to network and meet with representatives of other states and gather ideas, particularly what others are doing to increase public awareness. Jodi Corrow felt the sessions were very well organized and also noted it was a good opportunity to interact with Board members from other states. Barb Cederberg felt there was a good balance this year between sessions related to technology and sessions related to marketing/ public awareness. She noted Maryland, in particular, has had a good response for honoring locators and excavators that are recognized for their safety practices. She indicated GSOC will implement something similar in Minnesota. Dave Hunstad thanked all the attendees and again indicated GSOC encourages additional Board attendance at future conferences as part of the Board's effort to engage with the industry on a national level.

## **Delayed Responses to Tickets**

Jon Wolfram and Mike Mendiola from MnOps were invited to discuss the interpretation of a section of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 216D which deals with facility operator responsibility to locate within the period prior to the start time on the ticket. Jon Wolfram indicated that MnOps had reviewed the regulations and history of the statute. He recognized that industry practice is, if an excavation site cannot be timely marked, there is a need for the facility operator to contact the excavator (and attempt to mutually agree on a delayed start). This practice

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is referenced in MS216D.04 Subdivision 3(e). However, MnOps position is that, even though a facility operator may have complied with Subsection (e), it has still not complied with the requirement to locate prior to the start time on the ticket contained in subsection (a). MnOps believes these are two separate requirements. So while MnOps considers the circumstances, it still takes the position a locate that is not made by the start time on the ticket is a violation.

Many Board members expressed surprise at this position given industry practice and commented that their expectation was that there would be no violation if the parties mutually agreed to a delayed start to give locating crews an opportunity to mark. Jon Wolfgram noted that there is no legislative history available, but that in 2004 there appeared to be a change in the provisions of subsection (a) which deleted a phrase “unless otherwise agreed”.

Adam Franco noted that a ticket extension feature has been developed in Missouri that would allow a mutually agreed delayed start time to be inserted in the ticket without updating in the entire ticket (so the entire 48 hour period would not have to be started over).

Substantial Board discussion ensued. It was agreed that Adam Franco should demonstrate the ticket extension feature to the Board at the next Board meeting. Jon Wolfgram agreed that such an extension of the start time on the ticket would appear to comply with subsection (a) as well as subsection (e) of MS216D.04, Subdivision 3.

As part of the discussion, it was noted that some large project excavators are creating larger tickets than what is necessary (for example, a ticket may be created which is overly large; the contractor is fairly sure it will not be digging in an area in the next few weeks but is asking for an excavation ticket on the area anyway). It was suggested there needs to be more excavator education on this topic with those involved, as it is consuming unnecessary resources.

## **Initiatives to Support Safety in the Locate and Excavation Industries**

Mike Mendiola of MnOps then described briefly the preliminary plans for the locator rodeo to be hosted by MnOps in the Spring. In general, the rodeo is designed to be a staged competition for some of the best locators in the state who will compete on speed and accuracy in locating underground infrastructure. MnOps will contribute some personnel. The industry will also be asked to contribute personnel. GSOC and the remainder of the industry will be asked to contribute prizes or other forms of recognition.

A professional training opportunity may also be offered for the locators as part of the MnOps Safety Conference. Bruce West indicated a chart would be available to ask for GSOC Board members and others in the industry to volunteer for specific tasks to assist in the locator rodeo. The consensus was that the April GSOC Board meeting would be condensed so that the Board members could attend all of the rodeo, which is expected to take place Monday afternoon,

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April 9, 2018 at the location of the MnOps Safety Conference. That location is expected to be determined shortly.

Barb Cederberg announced that GSOC will sponsor a safety award program recognizing individuals selected locators and excavators for their contributions to safety and their professionalism in the conduct of their work. The awards will be from the Minnesota Common Ground Alliance (MNCGA) and will be sponsored by GSOC.

Barb Cederberg commented that this is one of a number of ways in which GSOC will recognize that October, 2018 will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ticket taking by GSOC.

Winners of these awards will be determined locally by the organizers of the damage prevention meetings. Participation by those organizers in this award program will be strictly optional. Depending upon the size of the meeting, 1-3 awards will be made. The awards will consist of a certificate of recognition and either a cash award or other form of recognition. GSOC will establish some criteria for selection for the sake of consistency but the selection will be performed locally by those who know the work of the people involved.

### **GSOC Branded Vehicle for PR/Damage Prevention Awareness**

Barb Cederberg then presented a proposal for GSOC to lease a vehicle which would be used for travel to damage prevention meetings, awareness and training events and other GSOC business. It will have a vinyl wrap designed by One Call Concepts Creative Division which will act as a traveling billboard to help build public awareness for underground damage prevention. GSOC's outreach has continually increased and employees have furnished feedback that they prefer not to use their own vehicles for all of the travel involved. They feel IRS rate reimbursement is not sufficient to offset vehicle wear and tear. The cost of leasing the vehicle as opposed to simply reimbursing employees for use of their respective vehicles at IRS mileage rates is expected to be roughly \$3,500 per year more. This was felt to be a good value for the boost in public awareness. The consensus of the Board was to accept the concept of a GSOC vehicle and authorize Barb Cederberg to proceed in selection and finalizing arrangements.

### **COO Report**

Barb Cederberg noted her activities in general are moving from an internal focus to an external focus. Call center oversight continues but there is an increasing amount of effort being spent on public awareness and outreach.

The Users Group met on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Remarkably, there are no issues being noted by the group with respect to call center operations or the web tickets. All initial issues encountered in 2016 have been addressed. The next meeting is November 30<sup>th</sup>. The issues of non-excavation

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tickets, contact information to be placed on tickets and the potential of clarifying auto marking instructions are all expected to be addressed.

As part of the call center oversight, key performance indicators will be reviewed and GSOC will look to determine how to perform web ticket reviews more quickly. She also noted that the practice of 100% review of new web submitted excavation tickets continues. The call back project has reduced the percentage of required callbacks for corrections on web tickets to roughly ½ of the proportion initially encountered. New call center quality reports will shortly be instituted and she will review the staffing plan for 2018. She noted that the ticket buffer adjustments made in 2017 have been safely implemented and that a process for dealing with facility operators which have gone out of business has been established in coordination with MnOps to advise excavators of potential situations where telecommunication lines have been abandoned and are no longer owned by an operating business.

The pilot project for web-based submission of emergency tickets continues. Three companies have had personnel authorized to web submit emergency tickets. The system has been lightly used so far.

Barb Cederberg also noted the gas damage analysis performed based on MnOps data was very helpful and the analysis was part of the discussion at the damage prevention meetings in the Spring and the analysis was part of the discussion at the damage prevention meetings in the Spring. Going forward, she expects to be involved in initiatives concerning damage prevention for large fiberoptic projects, reviewing improvements and the potential for utilizing auto marking instructions and continuing to raise awareness with regard to private facilities.

2018 goals include implementation of improvements in user experience of GSOC's software, improvement in uptime of all of the systems, participation in 216D Stakeholder's meetings and developing new tactics to improve home owner awareness of underground damage prevention.

## **PR Review**

Estelle Hickman then gave a presentation highlighting the efforts of GSOC concerning public awareness over the past year. Efforts were focused in 16 events this year in an attempt to reach more people in less time. She estimated there were approximately 15,000 in person interactions. Among those events, GSOC helped sponsor the Day of the Dozers event and the 811 Run which helped raise money for charitable purposes as well as building awareness for underground damage prevention. 47 educational presentations were given including over 32 damage prevention meetings, local union presentations and specific company presentations. There were over 7,000 attendees at these various events.



GSOC also continued its industry engagement particularly with the Minnesota CGA's marketing committee, agricultural awareness committee and assisted in producing the bi-monthly Minnesota CGA newsletter. She then described the major public awareness media campaigns including the statewide campaign with KFAN and its affiliate stations and the campaign with StarTribune Media. The combination of these major campaigns resulted in more than 16 million consumer impressions and was viewed to be a significant success. GSOC has gained the attention of those involved in damage prevention public awareness in the national OCC Users Groups as well as the national Common Ground Alliance due to the precise targeting of messages in these media campaigns.

Estelle Hickman also noted new initiatives including outreach to the Hmong community and the use of a Spanish translation user guide this year. Over 500 of the guides have been ordered from GSOC's website.

## **OCC Report**

Kim Boyd presented to the Board on behalf of OCC and advised of the record volume this year as over 746,000 tickets have been taken through October. The web submitted proportion of tickets has now risen to 70.6% for the year which is a significant increase from prior years and indicates good adoption of the NextGen software for web submitted tickets. Target for this year is 71% web submitted tickets. The percentage usually rises in November and December so this goal is achievable. Despite the record volume, the notification center has met virtually all of the key performance indicators and user satisfaction with the system appears high over 18,000 home owner tickets have been submitted. The new GSOC app was rolled out in September as well as an updated website and both have been viewed as very successful. In October, OCC conducted a network upgrade which will increase system reliability and upgraded its chat feature so that specific questions can now be routed to a person more specialized in the particular issue (such as facility operator iMap).

Kim Boyd then reviewed a number of ongoing projects including improvement of auto generated marking instructions (which are not currently utilized in Minnesota), the operator contact information update project and ITIC analysis to increase targeted training and improve ticket quality and a project to update its maps. Year to date, there have been over 6,700 map updates in 62 counties.

Over 440 users were trained on ITIC in 2017, including special company focused trainings for those who requested it. In addition, ITIC webinars are held every Wednesday where any user can be trained or refreshed in the use of the web ticket submission software.



Kim also related a number of team development activities conducted by OCC for the benefit of the CSRs and other staff, including a family picnic, customer appreciation week in October and food and toy drives scheduled for the Holiday season.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean E. Parker  
Recording Secretary

Next Meeting Dates:

January 10, 2018

April 9, 2018 [to be confirmed based upon date of MnOps Safety Conference]

August 15, 2018 [to be confirmed]

November 14, 2018