

Announcer ([00:01](#)):

You are listening to the Safety Moment Podcast by Utility Safety Partners. Safety is always a good conversation and it's a click away. Here's your host, Mike Sullivan.

Mike Sullivan ([00:17](#)):

Hi everybody and welcome to the Safety Moment podcast. I am your host, Mike Sullivan with Utility Safety Partners. My guest today, Mr. Wayne Jensen, we're going to be talking about something that Wayne actually mentioned to me in a conversation or a text message or something, and it just stuck with me. And he said, measuring what didn't happen, just that line in the context of our conversation. And as I said, it stuck with me and it's been just coming back to me ever since we had that conversation of there's something there. How do you actually measure what didn't happen? And further on in that conversation, Wayne said, maybe we can talk about that a little bit more one day and I'll explain what I mean. So what better way to have a discussion about what didn't happen, measuring what didn't happen than just doing it on a podcast and having Wayne join us. So Wayne, thank you so much for joining me today. This is going to be a fun conversation.

Wayne Jensen ([01:16](#)):

Well, I appreciate you providing an opportunity to talk about this stuff. I'm well invested in the damage prevention industry and I've been lucky enough to serve in a lot of capacities for a long time on getting out the message for damage prevention and developing tools to make it happen.

Mike Sullivan ([01:38](#)):

Well, it's a pleasure to have you here. Now, before we get into that, maybe just tell us a little bit about yourself.

Wayne Jensen ([01:44](#)):

Well, I spent a lot of years as a contractor. My early years of the career was as a contractor, have a degree in engineering, so what else should you do, but go into contracting. But it gave me a lot of real world experience, managing at a high level, doing just a pot load of work and just tons and tons of experience in preventing damage and keeping people safe in the trench. And both are very trying subjects. And I was lucky enough to spend a good bit of time in the power line construction industry and some of my greatest career experiences are there. And when I left the power line construction industry at Director of Safety of Pike Electric, it came to Stalin Associates, an insurance agency that Bob Stall had a vision to make a difference with his customers and he wanted in the office that had the kind of experience that could help us protect the people working for our clients. And all these years he supported me doing monthly damage prevention partnership meetings in the Tampa Bay area. I mean monthly. We're in our 17th year of monthly

Mike Sullivan ([03:19](#)):

Meetings, 17 times 12. That's a lot.

Wayne Jensen ([03:23](#)):

Yep. It's a lot. And it is a testament to Joe Williams, the owner of Kimmons Contracting in Tampa, Florida. He says, just do your job, prevent damage. I'll cover lunch space. And he's done it all this time.

Mike Sullivan ([03:44](#)):

That's amazing. And there's a lot of moving parts to the whole damage prevention process. And when you go back, you got into the business, you're an engineer, and you went into the work you were doing, did you ever envision that this would be the industry that it is today, the damage prevention process would be the industry that it is today?

Wayne Jensen ([04:03](#)):

Well, it was pretty hard to visualize in the early days when the National Transportation Safety Board in TSB decided that they need to intervene and start doing something about damage. I was the representative from the National Utility Contractors Association to represent the industry in deciding what we could do to prevent damage. So it's an unusual opportunity to have been there kind of in day one at the genesis of pretty much the whole 8 1 1 system.

Mike Sullivan ([04:42](#)):

And I think going back to those days, there was what they used to call what was affectionately called the DAM Quad, the Damage Prevention Quality Action Team. And I've been fortunate enough to know a couple of people who are on that team going back many years and the foresight they had, but they were forced to have it. I guess that foresight because of the damages. Edison, New Jersey I think was a big catalyst as were a few others, mean obviously the Olympic pipeline that happened in Washington state, those are massive catalysts that they had to be dealt with. So here we are, I mean decades later, and you could draw a line in the sand if you will, that proverbial line on the sand. You could draw that line saying, well, there's the before times when we didn't have CGA, the Common Ground Alliance, we didn't pre the dam, quad rich Felder, and then Bob KIPP and Sarah Magruder Lyle is there Now, we didn't have that. We didn't have legislation across the United States. You didn't have the three digit dialing. We didn't have what we use primarily here in Canada. Click before you dig, we didn't have any of that. So that brings us to the topic here, measuring what didn't happen, what if none of that happened? I mean, you have to figure that somebody would've done something but you just don't know. Right. Kind of like the butterfly effect and butterfly flops of wings in Beijing and then it rains in the mountains here in Canada.

([06:18](#)):

How do you do that? What's the math involved here of measuring what didn't happen? Concept.

Wayne Jensen ([06:26](#)):

Concept? Yes. Well, I think it's would be kind of helpful to talk about what did we do before there was marks.

([06:37](#)):

There was an era when the best state could do is tell you to call all the utilities you know about and do it. So we basically didn't have marks, but we didn't create many damages. And it's simply because we had a practice with the backhoe, the pipe layer would dig down a foot, clear the area, and then the backhoe operator would take off six inches, dig down a foot, clear the area, take off six inches. So actually how we made it work when there was nothing to help us is kind of a clue as to how we can prevent damage today. That's right. It's a practice when you have nothing to help you. It's a practice that we use to prevent damage. It wasn't a perfect world. I had a crew one time snag, if you can believe it, a copper gas line and pulled it out all the way into the house and nobody got hurt. I'll just tell you that

now. But it did scatter the house over five blocks after the gas held the house and blew it up. So that's how close I've been to the need for be conscientious about damage prevention

Mike Sullivan ([08:09](#)):

And those things. That scenario still happens today even with the damage prevention process being initiated through a locate request. Those things still happen today and unfortunately because usually because a locate request didn't happen and the vast majority is in Canada, I can't speak to the us, I'm not as familiar anymore as I used to be, but the vast majority of damages in Canada is because there was no low key request. And when that happens, that's an example I think again, measuring what didn't happen. Well that was the catalyst, the root cause. There was no locate request. So the damage prevention process never had a chance to start. It never had a chance to kick off. And because of that, all safety was thrown out the window. It was all left to chance. That said, the data that we have when there is a locate request, damage is avoided.

([09:10](#)):

99 doesn't happen 99% of the time. So basically 99%, the likelihood of damage is reduced down to 1% or less because there are other causes of damage, whether it's a bad locate or if it's God knows whatever else. But there are a series of other situations where damage will happen. Going back to though measuring what didn't happen, and one of the things I thought of that really came back to me many, many years ago, three careers ago, I used to work with the National Energy Board here in Canada, which is similar to the NTSP in the United States. It's the regulator for, or maybe off the pipeline safety, but it's the regulator for transmission pipelines in Canada. And I was part of the safety audit division, the acronym was sad.

([10:06](#)):

Anyway, I was part of the safety audit division and we would do audits of different pipeline companies on a variety of programs. One of them being their damage prevention program, which wasn't called that back then. It was their pipeline crossings program. And part of that governance, part of the damage prevention regulation, which was called the Pipeline Crossing Regulations at the time, was pipeline companies had to assess the effectiveness of their public awareness program. And when I think of measuring what didn't happen, it's very similar to that. I mean you're assessing the effectiveness of your awareness program. When we did all these things, we had contractor breakfast, we had banners, we had dig safe month, we had you name it, we had all kinds of paraphernalia out there, merchandise promoting call before you dig or click before you dig. But those are things that happened or activities.

([10:59](#)):

How can you prove that doing all those things led to no damages. It's very hard to do assessing the effectiveness of that awareness program. You might have another pipeline company. But yeah, we just put a note out in the newspaper once a year and we had no damages either. So how do you even engage the effectiveness of that? It both worked, but one we spent the farm on and the other one we didn't. So measuring the effectiveness or measuring what didn't happen reminds me of that. Now when we talked recently and you said we should talk about this, so walk me through perhaps an example that you can provide where measuring what didn't happen, provide some actual outcomes here for food for thought.

Wayne Jensen ([11:46](#)):

Well, in terms of what didn't happen, your statement that 99% of the locates that are done are done without damage. So how does that happen? How can it be that with no storyline that 99% avoid

damage? So measuring what didn't happen, well, we didn't have a damage for 99% of the time. So hooray, we're good, we're done. But we So the common ground alliance that you've been a part of forever has been dedicated to studying damages for, gosh, how long is it now? It's been a long time. It's been a long time in the late nineties. So the data set that the CGA is using is that 1% where a damage occurred. So I want to know what happened in the 99% and I'm not sure what we're determining in the 1% is guiding us down the right trail. And I simply say that because most of the time the root cause for the damage was insufficient excavator practices or insufficient locating practice. And golly, I just learned a whole lot about what happened with that or

Mike Sullivan ([13:26](#)):

Insufficient data. So we don't have an answer, right?

Wayne Jensen ([13:30](#)):

Yeah. So beginning to explore how contractors excavators are avoiding damage becomes really important. What are the right things that a contractor does to prevent damage? So one of the things I've learned over the years is the locate systems provides a positive response. Sunshine 8 1 1 is gravitating to saying utility response because maybe 95% of the people in the field, if you said what it's a positive response, could not give you an answer, not their fault. But so the focus on the positive response being reviewed in the field, it's not reviewed in the field hardly ever the copy of the ticket is stashed in their notebook. So if law enforcement comes up, you can prove that you got a ticket, but found that if the field crew knew how to read the positive response, the likelihood of a damage happening dramatically because then they find out that something's not marked. They can read it, they can see it not marked. So that's how do you measure how many times a field guy reads the positive response?

([15:16](#)):

We haven't connected all the dots to document that, but if we could, that would help us a lot just on are they reading the positive response, do they understand it? And quite honestly, if a contractor is out digging before all the facilities have been cleared, that's a problem. Can that be tracked as a failure? So the kind of flip side of measuring what didn't happen is if a field crew gets out to the site and has not reviewed the positive response, he might be lucky. So we're trying to distinguish what practices are actually working. One storyline that I have, I had a contractor client that produced, he was the number three or four caller in the state of Florida most calls, which means thousands of tickets a year. One guy managed hundreds and hundreds of subcontractors and he told all the subs that I'm going to manage your tickets without talking about whether it's the right or wrong of that. And he said, if you have a damage, I'll help you defend the damage if you give me one thing. And it was photos, he didn't demand any quality of photos. He just said, you have to provide me photos. And I was the guy watching the claims come through and they just didn't come through.

([17:08](#)):

So I noted that as a behavior that indicated that if you take pictures, you have success in not damaging something. So what is it about the action of taking pictures that was so effective and I mean hugely effective? So the behavior taking pictures, they all did it because they didn't want to risk damage. And just the common sense of what was going on, it was focus. I got to see marks, I got to take pictures of marks, and when you take a photo of something, something, it just clicks into mine and you start focusing on it. So in terms of measuring what didn't happen, if we were looked at crew A and crew B, crew A takes pictures and crew B didn't take pictures, we know that taking pictures is the best practice. So for any given company or number of companies, how many take pictures of their locate marks. And

so if a company is not taking pictures of their locate marks, why? So I think it's a data point that we can study much like studying a damage, why was it that somebody, a crew or a company did not use a best practice? And so studying why they didn't use a best practice in finding the root cause of that is helping us identify using a good thing to perpetuate more good things.

Mike Sullivan ([19:14](#)):

What you're saying brings me back to what you mentioned very earlier. The top of the podcast was in the days before a one or one call centers days before those existed, the digging community was employing essentially best practices to mitigate damage. And as you said, they weren't happening. Some big ones did happen and we are where we are today because of those, but are best practices. Then we bring in whether it's legislation or regulations or another best practice to register your assets with a one call center and submit a locate request product excavation. Do you think that okay, that's all a good thing, but does that also create a reality among people that okay, we have this locate request process now we have one call center's, notification centers. I don't have to really, that's all I got to do. Well, almost like a false reliability, best practices are still there. They aren't required by law and they shouldn't may influence law down the road. But now with the legislation to register your assets and submit a locate request, damages are still happening. Do you think that perhaps there's too much reliability on the legislation or too much emphasis on legislation that demands a locate request? Are we forgetting to do what's right?

Wayne Jensen ([20:56](#)):

Well, I actually think it's kind of worse in that legislation is really an excuse system for the contractor to get out of jail free card for a bad locate. So that is really of critical importance that my excuse for the damage was the locator didn't locate it within the tolerance zone. So I'll often in Florida, it's 24 inches out from the outside of the facility, right? So I'll ask groups of people, what about 25 inches? It's outside the tolerance zone zone or are you allowed to hit it? So turning it around, are you allowed to hit it if it's outside of the tolerance zone? And quite honestly it becomes pretty defensible. My excuse is it was outside of the tolerance zone. So that's a real hard story to beat. So a lot of contractors have a policy where if the tolerance zone is 24 inches, I go an extra foot and after that extra foot I dig and well, okay, you dug that extra foot, what's different from that tolerance from the other one? So how do we get to the point where we just got to find it? That's

Mike Sullivan ([22:42](#)):

Right. We know it's there.

Wayne Jensen ([22:44](#)):

It's there. So I have contractors that will actually dig five and six feet and then go ahead and dig. So I tell contractors, when you get the 24 inches, the tolerance zone, you can't find it, please call the locator and tell 'em to come out and help you because when you get to six feet, you're mad as heck and you're not going to call anybody and you're tired, you're over it.

Mike Sullivan ([23:16](#)):

Utility Safety Partners spring safety conference. It's happening again. We're looking forward to being at the JW Marriott in Edmonton at the Edmonton Ice District in mid-April 2025. Keep watching our social media feeds for more information and how you could win two tickets to see the Los Angeles Kings take on the Edmonton Oilers at Roger's place, April 14th as an early bird registration draw we're dealing with

right now and Alberta, we have what I call partial legislation. So the transmission pipelines that are governed federally or provincially, they are required to register those assets with utilities, ad partners or any other one call center in Canada. And any person digging within 30 meters or a hundred feet of those utilities must request a locate. So we have a one call within a hundred feet of these assets, but we don't have a comprehensive damage prevention legislation that says if you're digging, you must request to locate.

[\(24:24\)](#):

If you own bird utilities, you must register them with utility safety partners. We don't have that and we've been going after it. So let me just back up here we are going after legislation. We sincerely want to secure legislation, but when you get really close, and we are really close to going down that last hallway before we secure legislation, we started asking ourselves, do we really need, do we really need this? We've been able to do a lot without legislation. And when you have legislative language, it potentially locks you and blocks you can't do certain things because now you're governed by a regulator or you're governed by legislation or regulation. And there's a sense out there that will it impede innovation? Will it impede progress? Will it impede embracing technological advancement? And that is a very real question we're dealing with right now. And when we talk about what we're talking about right now, in the days before there was one call center or eight one one, people still had to get work done.

[\(25:51\)](#):

They still had to dig, they still had to build infrastructure and pipelines and everything else, and they did it in such a way that they were diligent. The diligent contractor stayed in business. Now with the reliability, perhaps again, I want not saying false reliability, but there's this reliability that okay, we have a one call, we have legislation or whatever the case may be. That's all I got to do. They're going to take care of everything. Well, no, this is where the shared responsibility comes in, which has been the shared responsibility, is that the language, the vernacular of the damage prevention process that is turned out by the Common Ground Alliance and all their members and rightfully so because it is a shared responsibility if you're putting a shovel in the ground, nobody's going to manage the safety better than or should manage the safety better than you. And so, and should we be worried here in Alberta, anywhere else that is contemplating that comprehensive legislation that it will hold us back as you and I have had some great conversations and we recently launched the alternate locate provider and the question has been going on, would we have been able to do that? And if we were subject to legislation or regulation, I don't know, measuring what didn't happen, right? And that's where we come back to this again measuring what didn't happen.

Wayne Jensen [\(27:19\)](#):

Well, I'll encourage you to alarm on my statement that the legislation we have almost everywhere provides an excuse system for damage. If you hit a facility outside of the tolerance zone, it's not your fault

Mike Sullivan [\(27:39\)](#):

To me, doesn't compute. That's

Wayne Jensen [\(27:40\)](#):

A real problem, a problem

Mike Sullivan [\(27:41\)](#):

It doesn't compute, right? I mean it seems to me if you submit a locate request and whether you're doing it online and you're mapping your polygon yourself or an agent is doing it for you, when you receive that ticket back and you have all the utilities that have been notified, you should be able to see that polygon. Is it where I'm digging? That is your project. That is your dig site. Regardless if you're digging one piece of it, that's your dig site. If you hit something in that dig site and it was located or it's supposed to be there, to me, that's where the investigation begins. This was your dig site, you own this, you identified this and maybe you were digging outside of it. Well then your locate request is wrong to begin with, but if that is your dig site, you better be damn sure that's you own that

Wayne Jensen ([28:33](#)):

Well and that is indeed really important. So let me draw us to, how do legislators pick the tolerance zone? So we got tolerance zones that are from 18 inches to three feet, maybe some places more. So how do the legislators determine what the tolerance zone should be? Let's start there. How do they decide what the tolerance zone is?

Mike Sullivan ([29:09](#)):

My guess it's influence from utility owner,

Wayne Jensen ([29:13](#)):

IT and the contractor.

Mike Sullivan ([29:16](#)):

Yeah, that's right. The digging.

Wayne Jensen ([29:19](#)):

So the tolerance zone from the contractor's perspective is you have to be careful this far, but after that you can go. So if you have a bigger tolerance zone, well you can't go as fast. So the poor legislators are just trying to do, I give 'em credit, they're just trying to do the right thing and balance the needs of all parties. But we're confusing balancing the needs with an actual responsibility to find this stuff because quite honestly, some of that stuff can kill you and if it doesn't kill you, it can put you out of business. So there's a lot of need. And so if we start thinking in terms of legislation being an excuse for damage, that helps us put focus on how we guide our discussions in the damage prevention community to help them understand that there's a whole lot more to it.

([30:28](#)):

One of the biggest problems that we face is the US is getting slaughtered with volumes that locates the same reasons why you developed the alternate locate program. We certainly have it here. So one of my personal strategies in Florida, at least in a group of people that know me is if you have a problem getting your locates, if you have a problem that you don't have a solution, give me a call. Let's talk about it. One of the situations I had, a field foreman went out and he saw no power locate marks on the ground and he could see the directional drill contractor down the street that he knew had drilled through the area. Oh yes. And the contractor was there to fix a block sewer. So gee, I wonder what happened there. So this field foreman said, this is wrong. And the owner of the company said, call Wayne.

([31:39](#)):

He calls me. I put in a call to the supervisor of the area for USIC and within 20 minutes he had a locator there. The supervisor says, I can see some proposed facilities on my drawings on the computer, and I see where my guy can hook up to based on the future installation. It was a clear site from USIC clear the contractor didn't have to do anything except go ahead and dig. He would've never been blamed for it, but it was 7,200 volts also. So what didn't happen was a damage there. And why didn't a damage occur? One, we had a foreman who did the right thing, he would not dig. And so how do we measure what didn't happen? What didn't happen was the death. What didn't happen was a damage because we had a contractor who raised his hand and said, this is not right. And lucky enough for me, he's still a crochety guy. He wanted to go to work, but he's going to do the right thing no matter what. And to get that kind of response and get him help so fast, nobody's hurt to get the job done expedited, it's kind of, and everybody's happy deal. So USIC jumped through hoops galore, responded instantly to do it. And every time I get called to help a contractor, which you believe I never get called twice by the same contractor and simply because they learn who to call.

Mike Sullivan ([33:39](#)):

That's right, that's

Wayne Jensen ([33:40](#)):

Right. And how to get help. So they never have to come to me twice.

Mike Sullivan ([33:46](#)):

What it underlines for me is we all want the same thing, whether you're the locator, the utility owner, the contractor, the foreman, I mean everybody involved, the entire one call center. We all want the same thing. We want no damage. We want to protect public worker, community safety and the integrity of those buried assets. We all want the same thing. And if somebody gets into a bit of a snag along the way, whether that is the snag is simply as I'm putting in my locate request and I'm doing it online, I'm having trouble. Well click the chat button. Somebody will help you. I'm getting a locate done. There's something that's wrong here. Well, you know what? Contact the utility. Somebody will help you. I'm digging and something is going wrong here. Well contact the utility owner, the locator or the one call center. Somebody will help you everywhere along the line, everybody bands together.

([34:35](#)):

Nobody's an island here. But the moment that locate request happens and is submitted, it initiates, it triggers that whole chain of events, that whole damage prevention process that is collaborative from the word go. And if we employ all of those opportunities for assistance along the way, there won't be a damage. I'm confident there won't be a damage. But if you just need to reach out, I can't understand what so-and-so in the field is doing right now, I don't know, but if they contact me and Biden, God, I'll help them. Of course I will. And everybody on my team will. You will. Everybody will. And maybe that's the point we need to get across that submitting that locate request, you've taken the first step and that is going to initiate the entire damage prevention process. It's like carrying a ball, downfield, I'm going to pass it to you. I want to get downfield and then he's going to pass it to somebody else and somebody else. We're all going to carry it, but we're going to get downfield together. And you initiate the process, but at some point you don't really own. It's the process. Ownership follows a path, but it all comes back to you. It all comes back to we need to make sure that whatever you're doing is done. And that to me is maybe the message here, measuring what didn't happen, that collaboration maybe didn't happen and that's why we haven't damage.

Wayne Jensen ([36:04](#)):

Well, the tolerance zones where the contractor has to hand dig, okay, it's a great thing, but it runs down a blind trail and it puts a little bit of a barrier between the utilities and the contractors. Because if a contractor's been in business a long time and he's been subjected to not getting his locates on time and he's ticked, and by God I'm going to do what I have to do, but not an inch more. And the level of animosity between contractor and utility can get pretty darn high. And I've seen many times in the damage for prevention world, the contractor's the bad guy. So I am kind of the representative of the contracting community, speaking, working, striving on their behalf. And sometimes that taints the whole process.

Mike Sullivan ([37:27](#)):

Well, it does. And if a contractor, an excavating contractor is making a locate request, they're diligent, mean that tells me a lot about them. There are very few people out there who digging is their life. They're going to do anything without a locate request. I can't understand why there would be, but the 99.9% of the majority, that's what they're doing. They're initiating that process. Now, if something happened along the way, well, it's probably there is something other factors that contributed to it, but it wasn't the fact that they were a rogue excavator. They get painted with the same brush because they're doing 99% of all the excavations out there and every time they do so there's a risk involved. So yes, if the damage happens, chances are it's going to be a member of the digging community that caused the damage because that's what they do for a living.

([38:16](#)):

They excavate and they want to do it right, but sometimes things go wrong. And that's why it's so important to look at that root cause analysis. When I look at the Canadian Common Ground Alliance dirt report or even the CGA dirt report, no locate LOCATE requests made to a one call center is the leading cause of damage every year. It's the same thing. No locate locate requests made to one call center. And again, that's because it never got a chance to kick off. But what the CCGA, and I only speak to the CCGA because I'm far more familiar with it, but what it doesn't do, what that report doesn't do, it doesn't go any deeper. It doesn't ask why was the locate request not made? Let's go there. We haven't gotten to the root yet. If we're just saying, well, there's no locate request made.

([39:07](#)):

Well why wasn't locate request made? Was it a lack of awareness? So I find that hard to believe in this day and age. Every utility owner out there, every one call center, every diligent excavator, were all singing from the same song sheet, click before you dig. Or was it apathy towards the damage prevention process? Well, I've been requesting locates through always delayed. And again, the A LP is going to respond to that too. Is that why it didn't happen? Or was it due to a lack of legislation like we just said? Was it due to that those answers to get to the real root cause analysis would really benefit the entire damage prevention process would benefit governance. It's not enough to say no, there's no locate request made. If you have 33% of damages have no locate request made. Well why? It seems to me we're not going down to the wire here. We're not figuring out the why. And until we do, we're not going to know. We can only surmise what the real reason was. So this is an extremely interesting topic and I think we're just scratching the surface here of the measuring what didn't happen. But you can take any scenario, I think any situation and look at it through that lens of what didn't happen. Why aren't we getting the results we want?

Wayne Jensen ([40:37](#)):

So in Florida, maybe almost everywhere, a contractor tends to call in more ticket area than they can physically do in 30 days. Everybody tries to do only call in what you can do in 30 days. And so the number of contractors that call in far in excess, too many tickets is huge. So the locators have a little system that if they call in a year's worth of work, they check the box. Ongoing agreement with contractors, not true, but they give it that code and send it back in the positive response and it just simply means it's unmarked.

[\(41:39\)](#):

So contractor called in too much area locator automatically flags it as agreement because they know that the contractor's going to call and complain, we don't have an agreement. Well then they're talking to 'em and that's how they flush out the contractor to get the real story in. So the highest concern I have is when there's a professional excavator with a no ticket, that number is really high. I'm concerned about all of them, but we have to know more about that data of professional locators not having a ticket. Is it because they forgot to renew? Well, there's software that does one thing automatically renews tickets. What could go wrong? So if you locate data, you pretty much can flag, I'm guessing what tickets are for foreign excess, the amount of area that's intended by your legislation or whatever, and watch what happened. Maybe we can find a way to make the system communicate that. Can you call us about this? So the flip side is how could we recognize the contractors that are doing it right, that are making a difference? How do we give 'em an attaboy? Because I'm a firm believer that if you want behavior, positive behavior to you got to

Mike Sullivan [\(43:38\)](#):

Reward

Wayne Jensen [\(43:39\)](#):

It, repeat it. You better be acknowledging it.

Mike Sullivan [\(43:41\)](#):

Exactly. Yep. Now, we actually started last year and a number of other centers and provinces and states do this, but we never had here in Alberta where we had a recognition awards. And last year, our 40th anniversary, or last year actually this year, this past February, it seems like ages ago, we recognized the excavator of the year, the locator of the year, and the member of the year for the 2023 digging season. And it was the first time we've done it and the criteria, the rewards process to identify who could be nominated the nomination process and then awarding it was robust. We put a lot of effort into that. But what better recognition there be by your peers to say, yeah, I'm the excavator of the year. I'm the locator of the year.

[\(44:38\)](#):

You're doing it right. Sometimes you're like, you said, you're, but you're doing it right. And I agree, we need to reward excellence. We need to recognize excellence. I think if we keep doing that, that if I was a runner up, well, geez, I want to do a little bit better than that guy next year. So you start to make this competition amongst the digging community or the locating community or the members even. I want to get that little trophy on my mantle. I want to be that excavator of the year. I want to be that member of the year. And by doing so, you're elevating the damage prevention ownership and improving the entire safety process. So yeah, I, I'm all in with you. I think it needs to happen. I think even with the alternate locate provider, we have a number of locators now have gone through the assessment protocol. They're providing their services.

[\(45:39\)](#):

As you know, we have more locators now today providing those services and ever before in Alberta. And it's just the beginning. That is it competition. It depends how you look at it. But those parties that have gone through that, they had to pay into it and get assessed and go through the process, and it's a long process. But once it's done, they are contributing to the damage prevention process like never before. And that also needs to be recognized. So I think we're getting somewhere. Sometimes you feel like you're dragging an anvil through the sand, but we're getting there.

Wayne Jensen [\(46:19\)](#):

I do have a little bit different perspective, and it's my belief that we want to give out that award for best excavator at least 5,000 times. So we don't really have much of a system of closing out of a ticket and declare no damage. But I wish we did. So we had an opportunity to quote thank the contractor for digging and not having a damage. So who is it calling in the tickets? Are the tickets being called in as designed as supposed to be? So how do we know who's calling in the tickets? Sometimes it's some poor lady in the office has never been in the field and she's supposed to translate what the project manager was. But you know what? When that lady gets the ticket done and there's no damage, how do we thank her? That's right.

[\(47:30\)](#):

We got How do you recognize her, right? Yeah. Yeah. So we got one tremendous lady in the office that does one of the best jobs in the planet. She remember Moheka, she works for team official. This lady handles four or 500 tickets at a time, and she is so diligent, so perfect. She has such beautiful relationships with locators and utilities, and everybody runs the help Myrna, and maybe that's her magic. So I do everything I can to tell miRNAs story in front of a lot of people when we do our damage prevention partnership meetings. I do my best to always let Myrna tell her story of how she does it, knowing that there's a dozen other people or a hundred other people listening to that story of how she does it. So inspiring people, acknowledging, doing right. The better we can do that. The constantly, thanks for what you did.

[\(48:49\)](#):

I beg contractors tell me which locators are doing a great job for you so I can compliment them. And the way our relationship with USIC, it's a good story. So I think we're right. Telling it as an association member, I was also the guy that solved problems. USIC was a problem, and I got elected to fix the problem. So I told the group, a large group of contractors, I said, you give me one story about how USIC does the right thing or did the right thing and I'll go fix it for you. It took six or seven months before somebody finally came to me and said, I got the story. Okay, what's the story? So the story was his guys were out potholing and trying to find facilities and a young locator drives by and notices the crew and he says, these people are struggling. So he stops, gets out his equipment, say, what's going on guys? We can't find this stuff. He starts hooking up and locating everything, working with them. He spent three hours with them. So

[\(50:20\)](#):

He was on his way home and he stopped and worked three hours with them. So I took that story and the head guy happened to be Joe Gross Close. I said, Joe, I got a good story to tell you, but you got to promise me the story won't get somebody fired because what he did, what's coloring outside of the alliance? The young man said, okay, agreed. And Joe Gross loved the story and he got recognition for that young man. That was extraordinary. And that young man started one of the greatest stories of contractors working together with locators, all locators, that one little story when we caught somebody

doing something, right? So my estimation is we got to find more and better ways of catching people doing the right thing. If somebody calls in a ticket and it is the right size right ticket area, how do we thank 'em for that?

Mike Sullivan ([51:32](#)):

Well, they've done it right, and from that point forward, everything has a much better chance, right? Yes.

Wayne Jensen ([51:38](#)):

Yeah. Yes.

Mike Sullivan ([51:39](#)):

Yep. Wayne, thanks for joining me today. This has been a lot of fun and I know it was short notice, but I sincerely appreciate your time and this is a topic that I think has the possibility of just being rediscussed and rediscussed rediscussed measuring what didn't happen. Maybe it's something that will be embedded into the damage prevention vernacular at some point down the road, because I think it needs to be. I really do think it needs to be. Thanks for joining me. It's been good. I

Wayne Jensen ([52:09](#)):

Appreciate the opportunity being with you, Mike. Thanks for all that you do, sir.

Mike Sullivan ([52:15](#)):

That's going to wrap things up on the podcast. I want to thank our producers stories and strategies, and I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any directory you're listening on. Please do leave a rating. We certainly appreciate it. You can follow us on X at utility safety. We're also on Instagram and Facebook. If you'd like to send us a note, maybe have an episode idea, maybe you want to be a guest, email us at info@utilitysafety.ca and put podcast in all caps in the subject header. I'm Mike Sullivan, I'm the president's utility safety partners. Click to know what's above and below. One click costs you nothing and not clicking. While that could cost you everything.