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2026

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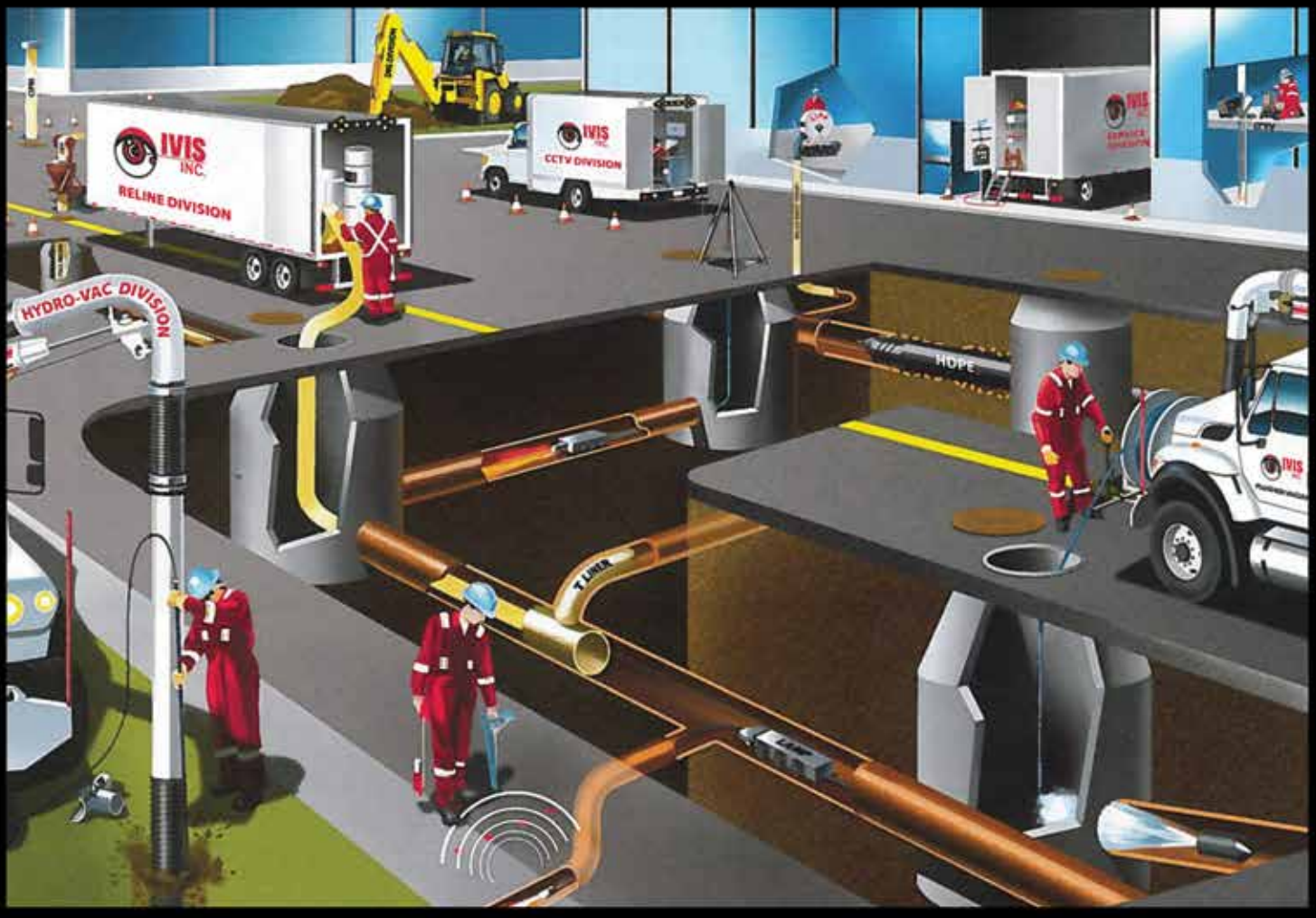

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THE LOCATOR

is published by
DEL Communications Inc.
www.delcommunications.com

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COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF
BRANDON ISERNIA

Publications mail agreement #40934510

Return undeliverable
Canadian addresses to:
DEL Communications Inc.
Suite 300, 6 Roslyn Road
Winnipeg, MB R3L 0G5
Email: david@delcommunications.com

PRINTED IN CANADA 11/2025

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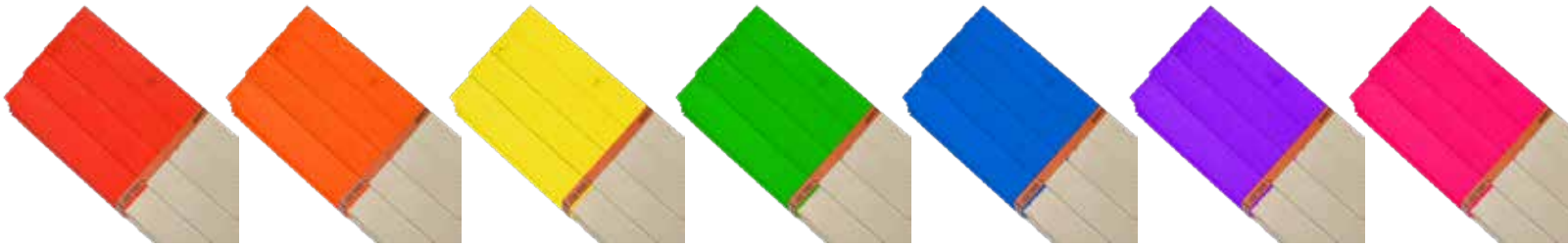

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Message from the president of CAPULC
JAMIE ANDERSEN

Hi everyone,

It's hard to believe we are well into another year – time really does fly by! I'm incredibly honoured and grateful to be re-elected as president of CAPULC, and I want to thank each of our members for your continued trust and support. Being part of this association and the incredible community of professionals who are dedicated to advancing underground facility locating and damage prevention is something I truly value. I'm excited about what lies ahead.

This magazine is always a highlight for me. It's more than just articles and updates – it's a reflection of the passion, dedication, and collaboration that make CAPULC such a strong and vibrant community. Every story shared and every insight offered helps us grow and move our industry forward.

This past year has brought meaningful conversations, steady progress and plenty of reflection. From expanding our reach to strengthening our standards, we have seen firsthand how working together leads to real impact. The National Underground Facility Locating and Marking Standard continues to gain traction, and it's just one example of how our collective efforts are making a real difference.

Looking ahead, there's a lot to be excited about. We're focused on creating more opportunities for learning, networking, and professional growth. Whether it's through events, committees, or simply connecting with fellow members, there's something here for everyone – and we want to make sure you feel empowered to get involved.

So, here's my ask: stay engaged. Share your ideas. Join a committee. Attend an event. Reach out to someone new. CAPULC is what we make it, and your voice matters more than ever.

While we've made great strides, we recognize that there are more in our locating industry who could benefit from being part of this community – and who could help us grow! That's why membership and sponsorship growth is a key focus for us this year. We're working on new ways to connect, engage, and bring value to both current and future members. That includes creating more opportunities to learn, network, contribute, and build relationships with sponsors who share our commitment to safety, professionalism, and industry excellence.

This magazine is a celebration of our efforts, and I hope it inspires you to get involved, share your ideas and help us grow!

Thanks again for being part of this journey. Let's make this year one of connection, collaboration, and community-building. Keep building, learning, and growing – together.

Warm regards,,
Jamie Andersen ●

Message du président
JAMIE ANDERSEN

Bonjour à tous,

J'ai du mal à croire que nous sommes déjà bien avancés dans l'année ! Le temps passe si vite ! Je suis extrêmement honoré et reconnaissant d'avoir été réélu président de CAPULC, et je tiens à remercier chacun de nos membres pour sa confiance et son soutien indéfectibles. Faire partie de cette association et de cette incroyable communauté de professionnels qui se consacrent à l'avancement de la localisation et de la prévention des dommages aux installations souterraines est une valeur que j'apprécie profondément. Je suis enthousiaste quant à l'avenir.

Ce magazine est toujours un moment fort pour moi. Il ne se résume pas à des articles et des mises à jour : il reflète la passion, le dévouement et la collaboration qui font de CAPULC une communauté si forte et dynamique. Chaque témoignage partagé et chaque point de vue partagé nous aident à grandir et à faire progresser notre secteur.

L'année écoulée a été riche en échanges constructifs, en progrès constants et en réflexions approfondies. De l'élargissement de notre portée au renforcement de nos normes, nous avons pu constater par nous-mêmes comment la collaboration a un impact réel. La Norme nationale de localisation et de marquage des installations souterraines continue de gagner du terrain, et ce n'est qu'un exemple parmi d'autres de l'impact réel de nos efforts collectifs.

L'avenir est prometteur. Nous nous efforçons de créer davantage d'opportunités d'apprentissage, de réseautage et de développement professionnel. Que ce soit par le biais d'événements, de comités ou simplement en échangeant avec d'autres membres, chacun trouvera son bonheur, et nous souhaitons que vous vous sentiez motivés à vous impliquer.

Alors, voici mon conseil : restez engagés. Partagez vos idées. Rejoignez un comité. Participez à un événement. Contactez de nouvelles personnes. CAPULC est notre marque de fabrique, et votre voix compte plus que jamais.

Bien que nous ayons réalisé d'importants progrès, nous reconnaissons que d'autres acteurs du secteur de la localisation pourraient bénéficier de notre intégration à cette communauté et contribuer à notre croissance ! C'est pourquoi la croissance des adhésions et des parrainages est notre priorité cette année. Nous travaillons sur de nouvelles façons de connecter, d'engager et d'apporter de la valeur à nos membres actuels et futurs. Cela implique de créer davantage d'opportunités d'apprentissage, de réseautage, de contribution et de développement de relations avec des sponsors qui partagent notre engagement envers la sécurité, le professionnalisme et l'excellence du secteur.

Ce magazine célèbre nos efforts et j'espère qu'il vous inspirera à vous impliquer, à partager vos idées et à nous aider à grandir !

Merci encore de participer à cette aventure. Faisons de cette année une année de connexion, de collaboration et de développement communautaire. Continuez à construire, à apprendre et à grandir ensemble.

Cordialement,
Jamie Andersen ●

WHO IS CAPULC

ABOUT US

Simply put, we are Locators who created an Industry Association for Professional Locators in 2001. We needed a National Voice and since then we have worked hard to built it. We've created standards, developed member resources, and are actively building connections nationwide to advance our profession.

Join us and help shape the future of our Industry and damage prevention.

MISSION

The Canadian Association of Pipeline and Utility Locating Contractors (CAPULC) provides leadership, promotes safety, and works to enhance the value and reputation of the underground facility locating industry in Canada.

- As contractors we have a vested interest in shaping our future, and we all have the desire to be proactive in the development of standards for the locating industry in Canada.
- As members of CAPULC we have a responsibility in directing the development of standards for the locating industry in Canada, through education and making important industry specific information available to our members.
- As a group we agree that the development of Canadian standards, the guidelines for evaluating competencies and qualifications required, should be determined by those of us with the knowledge and experience involved in the underground facility locating industry.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW.CAPULC.CA

OR EMAIL US
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Introducing the CAPULC Board of Directors

By Jamie Andersen, CAPULC

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I introduce the exceptional individuals who make up our 2025 CAPULC Board of Directors. As president, I have the unique privilege of working alongside this dynamic group of professionals who bring a wealth of experience, insight, and passion to our association.

Each board member represents a distinct corner of our industry – from seasoned field experts to strategic thinkers – and together, they form a powerhouse of leadership dedicated to advancing underground facility locating across Canada. Their commitment to safety, innovation, and collaboration is the driving force behind CAPULC's continued growth and impact.

In true CAPULC fashion, we've continued our tradition of introducing the board in a fun and personal way. Past issues have highlighted the personalities behind the titles, and this year is no different. We asked each board member two simple yet revealing questions. Their answers offer a glimpse into the individuals guiding our association, showcasing their unique perspectives and the shared values that unite us: a deep respect for the work we do, a relentless drive to improve our industry, and a heartfelt commitment to protecting the communities we serve.

I am truly honoured to work with this remarkable team. Their support, energy, and vision inspire me every day. I'm excited for what we have accomplish together – and even more so about what we'll achieve in the year ahead.

Let's meet the 2025 CAPULC Board of Directors – and don't forget to check out their biographies on our website!

THIS YEAR'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS QUESTIONS:

- What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?
- What did you originally want to be when you grew up…and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?
- Pick one to answer…

— What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

— If you had to trade lives with a cartoon character for one week, who would it be and what's the first thing you would do?

President: Jamie Andersen – Alberta/British Columbia
First Alert Locating Ltd.

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

I have been an active member of the CAPULC board since its inception and currently serve as president. Within the association, I do my best to contribute to several committees, including Education & Standards, Advertising, Marketing & Communication, Governance, and Finance.

Through CAPULC, I represent the Alberta Common Ground Alliance (ABCGA) as an "at large" board member with Utility Safety Partners (USP), participating in both the Training & Standards and Best Practices Committees. CAPULC's membership with other national entities allows me to serve as a senate member on the Canadian Common Ground Alliance (CCGA) Board of Directors, engaging with other regional partners and senate members.

My company, First Alert, is a member of the Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA), where we actively participate in the Grande Prairie Regional Safety Committee, focusing on local industry safety topics.

Balancing these roles is no small feat, but through CAPULC, I've had the chance to dive deep into the damage prevention industry and connect with some truly amazing people. It's been an unexpected journey – but one I wouldn't trade for anything!

What did you originally want to be when you grew up…and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

I always wanted to run my own business and work with computers. While I do run my own business and still work with computers, it's not in programming where I had intended. I kind of "stumbled" into the locating industry when I came back from school and met my husband. He had just started his new company and needed a "helper" in the field…I guess I was the first choice. Needless to say, I stayed and since then we have helped develop our company. I completed most of my safety background and am one of the owners and CEO of our hard-working company! With my involvement through CAPULC, I have been exposed to the entire damage prevention industry and love networking with those within it!

If you had to trade lives with a cartoon character for one week, who would it be and what's the first thing you would do?

I would have to say Alvin from The Chipmunks. Alvin was always a mischievous one, with a knack for causing chaos and somehow making it adorable. He's constantly dodging responsibility "with charm and a wink", and I never have that luxury…so that is what I would do first! Not to mention, one of the first things I would do is zipline across a kitchen and bound off a wall and land on my feet!

Vice President: Gary Mason – Alberta Underground Damage Prevention Specialist LineStar Utility Supply Inc.

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

I sit on the board of directors for CAPULC and the Advertising, Marketing and Communication Committee. I also sit on the Education and Awareness committee for USP. I've completed locator equipment training throughout Western Canada for the past 12 years.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up…and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

When I was in school, I dropped out because I was going to be a rock god. I quickly found out it doesn't pay very well – so I looked for an industry where the economy doesn't affect the budget. I always have said "this industry found me".

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

I have many wonderful things in my office and on my desk (pick one) that inspire me on daily basis: Chinese Buddha known as Budai; a photo of *The Lone Ranger*, a painting of "The Dude"; a painting of Buster being startled by a sheep, a Napoleon Dynamite figurine.

Treasurer: Matt Etherington – Alberta
EM Utility Locating

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

Since 2015, I have sat with Alberta's Utility Safety Partners Best Practices Committee and joined the Education and Standards Committee. I also host free education sessions on the damage prevention process every April in support of Dig Safe Month. Call me if you want one for 2026.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

Teacher, specializing in math and drama. I actually accepted with a special exception for the degree. I started utility locating to pay for tuition, but I was unable to save enough. Sixteen years ago, I started because my father received a locate that was riddled with errors and told me to give him my resume to send in so they "could have someone with an actual brain to complete locates correctly".

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

My office desk is covered in unusual things. I have an autographed blade from Ryan Smyth's stick, three autographed Jerome Iginla rookie cards, a vial of holy water straight from the Vatican, a piece recovered from the Titanic; CDs, DVDs, and drum heads autographed by various musicians and actors that I have met over the years, and my Locator of the Year award.

If you had to trade lives with a cartoon character for one week, who would it be and what's the first thing you would do?

As the resident young person, I would say Steven from Steven Universe, and I would spend the day on the beach. But so all the older folks can relate, I will say Garfield and spend the entire week catching up on all that sleep I'm missing.

Director: Donald Richard – New Brunswick
Vice-President – Locate Management Institute

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

CAPULC director; CAPULC Education and Standards Committee; CCGA Best Practices Committee; ATLCGA board member; and treasurer, CERTLOC Global, Australia.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

Fireman. I was working in IT for over 25 years, mostly in Atlantic Canada, when I was asked to take on a VP role for a line locating company in Alberta. Shortly after taking that role, I realized that the industry needed competency-based training, so I began writing training programs utilizing former past board members of CAPULC as SMEs. Not long after, a multi-national approached us to customize locator trainer and ground disturbance training for their employees. This endeavour led us to create our training organization.

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

1964 Winchester 94-30-40, and I don't hunt.

If you had to trade lives with a cartoon character for one week, who would it be and what's the first thing you would do?

Space Ghost. I'd fly through space looking for other intelligent life.

Director: Tony Brunette
Manitoba/Ontario/Nunavut
Structure Scan Inc.

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

Aside from a board of directors member with CAPULC, I am involved with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, Winnipeg Construction Association, Construction Association of Rural Manitoba, Construction Safety Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Common Ground Alliance, and Canadian Public Works Association, to name a few.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

I wanted to be a farmer. Purchased a locator as an additional tool for my GPR business, and it is now 50 per cent of my business.

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

Most interesting thing on my desk is a Khukuri knife. My nephew was in Nepal teaching children that were rescued from child slavery, and I sent him some funds so he could stay there an extra month, which was in a village that hand made these blades, so they made me one.

If you had to trade lives with a cartoon character for one week, who would it be and what's the first thing you would do?

I would be the Wiley Coyote because he never gives up, and the first thing I would do is barbecue the road runner.

Director: Corey Baker – Alberta
Coordinator of the Underground Locate Department – Enmax

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

I sit on the board of directors of CAPULC and am a member of the Advertising and Marketing Committee. I sit on the USP OAC (Operations Advisory Committee) and a member of the USP Best Practices Committee. I would like to join the CCGA Best Practices Committee.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

When I was growing up, I wanted to be a firefighter.

While working for Enmax as a PSE (power systems electrician), I took part in a year-long expression of interest in the locate department and did not end up leaving. From there I branched out to becoming a member of various organizations. I was a board member of the former ABCGA (Alberta Common Ground Alliance) and a board member of the former CRUDPC (Calgary Regional Underground Damage Prevention Committee).

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

Most unusual thing and one of my favourites on my desk…an "F" bomb.

Administrative Coordinator: Tracey Paluck – Canada-wide Canadian Association of Pipeline and Utility Locating Contractors (CAPULC)

CAPULC's Administrative Coordinator for over three years, Tracey is affectionately known as "the glue holding it all together." While not a board member, the team once again insisted she be included — likely payback for the creative Board Introductions she put them through in previous years.

Tracey brings a blend of professionalism, creativity, and dedication to everything she does. Her collaborative spirit, attention to detail, and problem-solving mindset have made her an invaluable part of CAPULC's continued success. Known for her inquisitive approach and hands-on involvement, she tackles every project with genuine enthusiasm. She promises she'll be behind the scenes for years to come!

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

Currently with my duties as administrative coordinator, I am actively participating in all our main committees: Advertising, Marketing and Communications; Education and Standards; Finance, and anywhere else I can be of assistance.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

From doctor to pilot to motocross racer to police officer, my ambitions shifted widely, making a single career path feel elusive. With an insatiable thirst for learning and interests continually branching off in new directions, the "what I want to be" adventure remains a work in progress.

When I heard that CAPULC was looking for an administrator, I felt my strong organizational and management skills might be a great fit — and thankfully, the Board agreed. After attending a few committee meetings, I was amazed by the exceptional knowledge and experience CAPULC members bring to the industry. Their passion for damage prevention and advancing the locating profession was instantly contagious. Since then, supporting their mission in any way I can has made it easy to look forward to work each day.

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

In my office, I have a Great Dane!

Director: Richard Lamontangne – Saskatchewan/Manitoba/North Dakota, Absolute Locating Ltd.

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

Aside from my involvement here at CAPULC, I sit on the board of directors for Saskatchewan First Call.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

While it seems like a hundred years ago, I went to university right after high school to study political science with ambitions for law, but here I am all these years later still working in the oil patch after leaving university "for a year" to make some money and continue my studies. That oil patch work led me to running a service rig anchor truck, which required some basic capabilities to run a line locator. When the industry shifted to free-standing rigs, I pivoted – well, stumbled might be the better word – into line locating services. At the time, demand for those services was just starting to grow in our area, and I've been part of the industry ever since.

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

Unusual? I suppose my autographed Winnipeg Jets mini fridge that I received as a season ticket holder a few years back.

Director: Josh Dodds – Ontario
4D Locate Solutions Inc.

What associations, committees or community involvement are you involved in that supports the industry's work for line locating and/or damage prevention?

My involvement in supporting the industry's work for line locating and damage prevention is rooted in active participation with several organizations and initiatives. Alongside my ongoing engagement with CAPULC, I have been a dedicated member of the ORCGA Best Practices Committee since 2022. In this role, I contribute to shaping industry standards and sharing best practices that help advance line locating and damage prevention efforts.

Furthermore, I facilitate and deliver the ORCGA DPT and SET courses. These educational opportunities allow me to share my expertise and field experience directly with locators and excavators, striving to equip them with the knowledge necessary to work safely and effectively.

What did you originally want to be when you grew up...and how did you stumble into a career within the locating and/or damage prevention industry?

When considering my career trajectory, my original ambitions did not centre around the locating or damage prevention industry. The path that led me here was unexpected and unplanned; I found myself entering this field by chance. Through this journey, I discovered a passion for the work and a commitment to industry safety and best practices that continues to drive my involvement today. Originally, I had ambitions to join the Canadian Forces as a combat engineer. However, at the time, opportunities in that area were unavailable, and I was offered positions in LTIS or ATIS – telecom technician roles within the army and airforce. As these options did not appeal to me, I chose instead to enrol in the Engineering program at McMaster University.

Ironically, after completing my first year at university, I began working as a cable installation technician. This experience served as the gateway to my eventual career in the locate industry. Over time, I developed a strong sense of passion for the work, along with a commitment to industry safety and best practices. This dedication continues to inform and drive my involvement in the field today.

What is the most unusual item in your office or on your desk?

A talking Darth Vader that answers your questions like a magic eight ball.

Brad Armstrong – Alberta/Saskatchewan
Walleye Locating Ltd.

Although Brad wasn't able to participate in our Q&A this year, he remains a valued and active member of the CAPULC Board of Directors.

Brad joined CAPULC in 2021 and became a board member in 2022, bringing with him over 20 years of experience in line locating and ground disturbance. Throughout his career, he's witnessed the damage prevention industry evolve significantly and is proud to be part of an association that advocates for higher standards and best practices.

In addition to his role on the board, Brad contributes to CAPULC's Education & Standards Committee, helping to shape the future of training and professionalism in the industry.

Brad is the owner of Walleye Locating Ltd., a company based in Wainwright, Alberta. Walleye Locating provides a wide range of services including line locating, ground disturbance supervision, and land administration across multiple sectors. With operations in both Eastern Alberta and Blackfalds in the West/Central region, Walleye is known for its diverse expertise – from oil & gas to environmental, residential, and municipal applications.

Brad's dedication to the industry and his hands-on experience make him a key contributor to CAPULC's mission and a respected voice in the damage prevention community.

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Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to these outstanding CAPULC Sponsors who propel our mission forward with their commitment, vision, and leadership. Their steadfast support strengthens our initiatives, inspires collaboration, and plays a vital role in safeguarding Canada's critical underground infrastructure. Together, we are building a stronger, safer industry for generations to come.

Ready to make an impact? Become a CAPULC Sponsor today at www.capulc.ca/sponsors or email Tracey at admin@capulc.ca.

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Alberta

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TELUS
Darcy Hurlock
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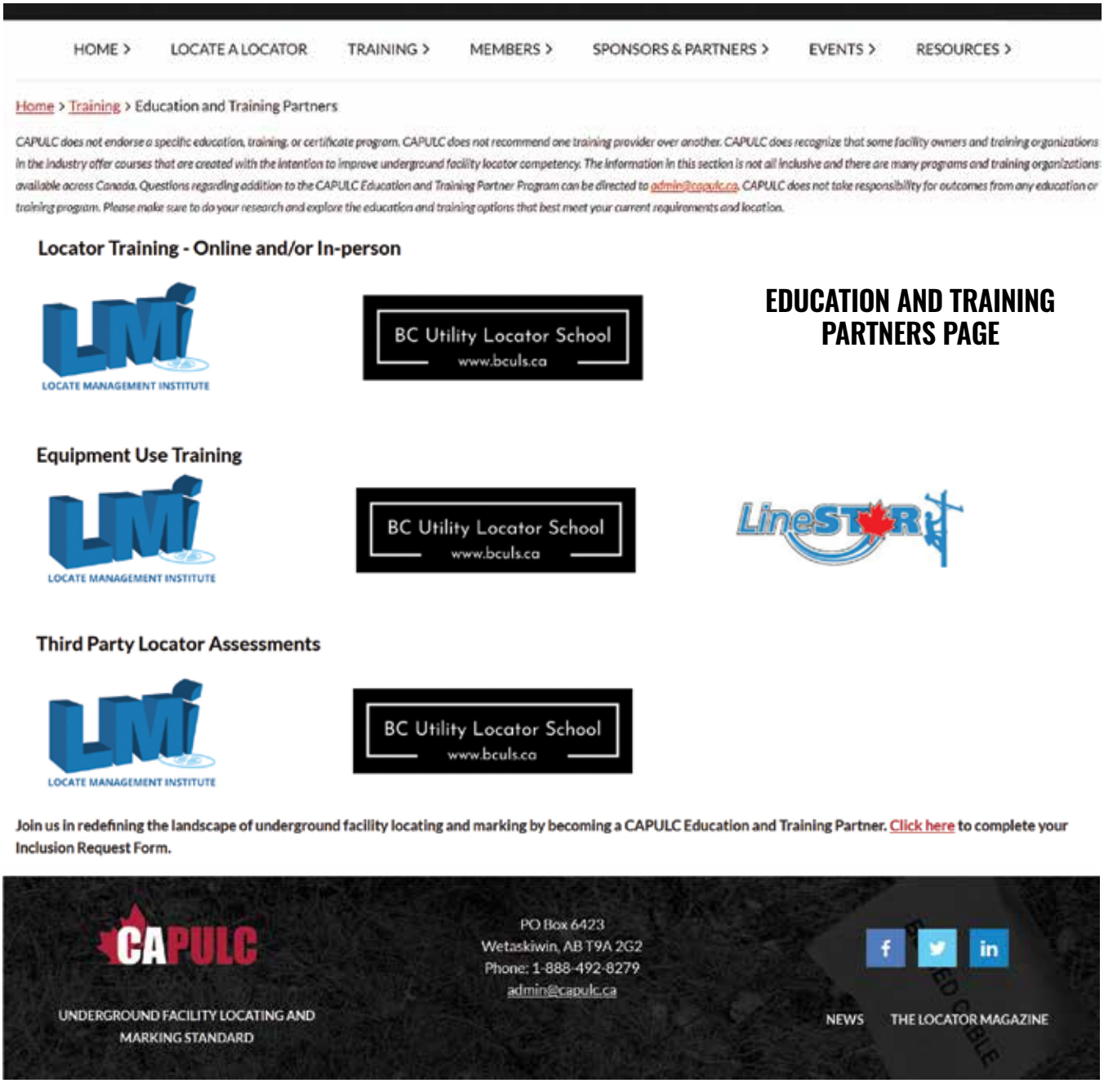
SASKENERGY
Saskatchewan

Education and Standards Committee update

By Donald Richard and Jamie Andersen

Following the milestone release of CAPULC's Underground Facility Locating and Marking Standard (Version 1.0) in 2023, the Education and Standards Committee has continued to build on that foundation with meaningful new initiatives aimed at supporting our members and advancing industry practices.

This year, we've entered the early stages of developing the Member Resources section on the CAPULC website. While still in progress, members can expect to see this space begin to populate soon with a wide range of helpful tools and valuable materials. Some resources will be publicly accessible; others will be exclusive to CAPULC members – reinforcing the value of membership and sponsorship.



Importantly, this section is not a "one and done" initiative. It will continue to grow and evolve over time, shaped by the needs and feedback of our industry and membership. The resources featured – ranging from educational videos and topic-specific documents to checklists, learning tools, and incident investigation tips – are not developed solely by the committee. They represent a collaborative collection sourced from CAPULC members, associates, clients, and industry partners across Canada. These resources are designed to support locators, trainers, and stakeholders across the underground facility locating industry.

In addition, we have begun building out our Education and Training Partners page to help members explore education and training opportunities across Canada. While CAPULC does not endorse or recommend specific programs or providers, this section highlights organizations offering courses aimed at improving underground facility locator competency. It's a growing resource intended to support informed decision-making, and we encourage members to research and choose options that best suit their needs and location.

If you are a training provider interested in having your company featured, please visit the CAPULC website and complete the Inclusion Request form that we will consider for the Education and Training Partner Program.

Looking ahead, the committee has begun reviewing Version 1.0 of CAPULC's National Underground Facility Locating Standard with an eye toward enhancements and additions. We are actively working through the Continuous Improvement Log and incorporating feedback we have received. Our goal is to ensure this document remains dynamic, relevant, and reflective of best practices.

We remain committed to connecting, engaging, and delivering value to our members – both current and future. Through strategic growth, expanded resources, and ongoing refinement of the Standard, the Education and Standards Committee is paving the way for a stronger, safer, and more informed locate industry across Canada.

If you're passionate about advancing underground facility locating and marking practices and want to contribute to this important work, we encourage you to visit the CAPULC website and apply to join the Education and Standards Committee. By expanding and diversifying our team, we will be better equipped to tackle new challenges, explore fresh ideas, and continue driving meaningful progress for our industry. ●

ELEVATING LINE LOCATING AS A CAREER: **CAPULC launches Career Awareness and Recruitment Campaign**

By Jamie Andersen (CAPULC), Kaitlin Bentkowski and Ashley Lawson (Jiva Consulting)

Locators play a vital role in safeguarding underground infrastructure, and demand for their services continues to rise alongside the expansion and maintenance of utility networks. Yet the industry faces a significant challenge: a shrinking workforce. While exact figures are difficult to pinpoint, industry stakeholders report a noticeable decline in the number of locating professionals over the past several years. The COVID-19 pandemic and broader economic shifts have contributed to workforce challenges, leaving the industry to meet rising demand with fewer qualified personnel.

One key barrier to workforce growth is a lack of visibility. Underground facility locating (UFL) remains a relatively unknown career path, with limited resources available to help job seekers discover and explore it. For instance, prominent occupational research platforms, such as ALIS (Alberta's Career Learning and Information System, available at www.alis.alberta.ca), lack dedicated profiles for underground facility locating, making it more challenging for potential entrants to learn about the profession.

To address this gap, the Canadian Association of Pipeline and Utility Locating Contractors (CAPULC) has launched an exciting new initiative, supported by a Government of Alberta Workforce Partnership Grant and developed in collaboration with Jiva Consulting (a Calgary-based consultancy that supports energy and infrastructure businesses in achieving their goals) that aims to attract new talent and elevate line locating as a viable and rewarding career.

This initiative will benefit both employers and job seekers by creating publicly accessible resources that support career awareness and recruitment. These resources are being shaped through an industry-wide online survey and enriched by insights from seasoned professionals across various sectors of

underground facility locating, including business ownership, training, and equipment supply.

Among the final deliverables will be a Position Profile and a Career Roadmap.

CAREER AWARENESS 1

To ensure broad accessibility, these resources will be made freely and publicly available online via CAPULC's and Jiva Consulting's websites. Job seekers will benefit by having resources to help make an informed and intentional decision about a career in underground facility locating. Employers of underground facility locators will benefit by having a broader pool of candidates applying for underground facility locating roles, thanks to increased awareness of the role.

POSITION PROFILE

- Outlines the typical requirements for working as a line locator
- Serves as a base for creating job postings
- Streamlines the hiring process for employers

CAREER ROADMAP

- Aids job seekers by clarifying potential career development opportunities
- Outlines minimum requirements for career pathways
- Delivered via an easy-to-follow visual map

Additionally, several underground facility locating career awareness sessions will be held, both online and in-person. These sessions offer valuable opportunities for employers to connect with potential recruits and for job seekers to learn more about the profession and its opportunities. While these sessions are currently in development and their dates are still being finalized, interested parties can expect these sessions to launch in 2026.

To stay informed, follow CAPULC and Jiva Consulting on LinkedIn or visit their websites in early 2026 for updates on resource availability and session dates.

The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.

Funding provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada–Alberta Job Fund. ●

Advertising, Marketing, and Communications Committee update

By Jamie Andersen, CAPULC

The Advertising, Marketing, and Communications (AMC) Committee plays a vital role in amplifying CAPULC's presence and fostering meaningful engagement across our industry.

Our mission is to:

- Enhance communications with members, non-members, and stakeholders to raise awareness of CAPULC's initiatives and impact.
- Strategically market the benefits of membership and develop new services that address evolving industry needs – positioning CAPULC as the go-to professional association.
- Plan and execute events that bring our community together, including our Annual General Meeting (April/May) and General Meetings (November/December), while also representing CAPULC at symposiums and trade shows.
- Maintain consistent brand messaging across all platforms to ensure a strong, unified voice.
- Leverage data and feedback to refine our strategies and maximize the effectiveness of our outreach.

Behind the scenes, the AMC Committee has been hard at work producing *The Locator* magazine, increasing membership awareness, organizing CAPULC events, and creating promotional resources for industry conferences and trade shows.

We're also excited to share that new resources and information will soon be available thanks to the efforts of our Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), which is spearheading the CAPULC Career Awareness and Recruitment Campaign. This initiative is proudly supported by the Province of Alberta, in partnership with the Government of Canada, through funding provided by the Canada-Alberta Job Fund. This campaign aims to promote career pathways in our industry and strengthen workforce development. Readers can learn more about this initiative in a dedicated article within this magazine.

A special thank you goes to Tracey Paluck, CAPULC's administrative assistant, whose dedication and versatility are instrumental to our success. Tracey single-handedly manages our website, social media presence, and correspondence with Marketplace providers – ensuring our communications remain timely and professional.

This committee meets high expectations and is driven by a passion for excellence. We welcome and encourage more member participation to help us expand our reach and better serve the CAPULC membership. ●

Elevating the role of locators: A national imperative

British Columbia BCCGA Common Ground Alliance

In today's complex underground infrastructure landscape, professional utility locating is not just a technical task – it's a critical safeguard for public safety, environmental protection, and infrastructure integrity. The BC Common Ground Alliance (BCCGA) has made it our mission to champion this essential profession by setting a new benchmark for training, certification, and industry recognition.

Recognizing the high stakes involved in accurate underground utility locating, we've worked closely with field experts and industry partners to build a rigorous, province-wide curriculum that empowers locators with the precision, accountability, and expertise their role demands. Our collaboration with the BC Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA) has resulted in thousands of trained professionals who now serve as the first line of defense against excavation-related incidents.

To further professionalize the field, we partnered with the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC) to establish the Registered Utility Locator Technician (RULT) designation. This credential not only validates technical competence – it elevates the status of locators as skilled professionals whose work underpins safe development across the province.

As we continue to lead in British Columbia, we invite other jurisdictions to join us in recognizing and reinforcing the vital role of locators. Together, we can build a national training standard that reflects the complexity and importance of this profession.

For more information, please visit www.commongroundbc.ca or contact our staff directly. ●

One year in: The success of Utility Safety Partners' Alternate Locate Provider Program

In just one year, Utility Safety Partners' (USP) Alternate Locate Provider (ALP) program has proven to be a game-changer in Alberta's damage prevention landscape. What began as a bold initiative to expand locator capacity and reduce damages has exceeded expectations, setting a new benchmark for collaboration, efficiency, and safety.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE HEAD-ON

Like many jurisdictions across North America, Alberta faced a growing challenge: a limited pool of locators tasked with keeping pace with rising excavation demand. Effective ClickBeforeYouDig awareness programs, supported by hundreds of buried utility members across the province, met head-on with seasonal spikes in excavation demand, workforce shortages, and infrastructure growth creating delays, frustrating contractors, and unfortunately, increasing the risk of damage. While the locate request process and data management experienced unforeseen advancements over the past decade, the act of "getting paint on the ground" hadn't changed in 30 years.

USP's ALP program, launched in August 2024, offered a practical solution: allowing qualified alternate providers to perform locates under a structured, accountable framework. This model not only relieved pressure on traditional locate resources but also gave industry stakeholders more choice and flexibility.

RESULTS THAT MATTER

The first year of implementation has delivered measurable and meaningful results:

- Introduced an Option: The ALP provides the digging community with the option of selecting a registered locate service provider to facilitate locating and marking buried energy and utility assets rather than the conventional method where utility owner contractors provide the service.
- Increased Capacity: The ALP program unleashed the contract locator bottleneck and expanded locator availability for consortium and large infrastructure

owner locating; unleashing the capacity that was there to do types of work that were previously blocked to that capacity ensuring projects stayed on schedule.

- Reduced Damages: With faster, more reliable locates, the province saw a dramatic reduction in damages to buried facilities (at the time of this writing, only two damages over 35,000+ projects), protecting Albertans, the environment, and critical infrastructure.
- Improved Contractor Satisfaction: Feedback from contractors highlights the value of choice, with many praising shorter delays and greater confidence in project planning.
- Operational Resilience: By diversifying locate capacity, the program reduced the risk of bottlenecks during high-demand periods such as spring thaw and peak construction season and has led to a stronger more diversified pool of locators that the industry can continue to rely on moving forward.

A MODEL OF COLLABORATION

The success of the ALP program rests on its foundation of collaboration. Utilities, contractors, locate service providers, and regulators worked together to design a system that maintains the highest standards of safety and accountability while enabling flexibility.

Robust oversight and auditing ensure all providers meet or exceed industry standards, maintaining the integrity of Alberta's damage prevention system.

LOOKING AHEAD

The first year of the Alternate Locate Provider program is just the beginning. USP is committed to refining the model, sharing lessons learned with partners across Canada and the United States, and supporting collective goals to reducing damages. Interest in the program from both excavators and locate service providers continues to be strong and we continue to see new applicants for ALSP registration. USP also anticipates members of the digging community, capable of becoming ALSPs, will eventually absorb the locating and marking function into their business.

As excavation demand continues to grow, Alberta's ALP program demonstrates how innovation, collaboration, and a willingness to rethink traditional models can deliver real, measurable improvements in public safety and infrastructure protection. ●

Sask 1st Call: Growing together for a safer Saskatchewan

This digging season has been the busiest yet for Sask 1st Call, with new subscribers joining every month as we continue to expand across the province. Our vision is simple: to become the only call before any digging project begins. By bringing more facility owners and operators into the network, we can make Saskatchewan's digging community even safer, more connected, and better informed.

SUBSCRIBING TO SASK 1ST CALL HELPS YOUR ORGANIZATION:

- Upgrade safety and avoid strikes: When excavators contact Sask 1st Call, your company is automatically notified, allowing you to mark your buried lines and prevent damage, injuries, or service disruptions.
- Reduce risk and save money: A single strike can lead to costly repairs and downtime. Across Canada, underground damages cost more than $1 billion annually.
- Streamline communication: One central portal reaches all subscribed facility owners – no redundant calls or monitoring.
- Align with best practices: Join a province-wide network promoting safe digging through initiatives like "Click Before You Dig" and "Dig Safe Month" each April.
- Demonstrate compliance and due diligence: Show your organization's commitment to federal and provincial safe digging regulations while protecting workers, the public, and the environment.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Free locates: Excavators request locates at no cost, triggering automatic alerts to you.
- 30-day validity: Markings remain valid for 30 calendar days, reducing repeat requests.
- Managed by SCGA: Since June 2023, the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA) has operated the service, enhancing coordination across Crown and private utilities.
- Public awareness campaigns: Efforts like Dig Safe Month and contractor education sessions drive safer digging practices province wide.

WHO SHOULD SUBSCRIBE?

- Utility providers (natural gas, water, electricity, telecom)
- Pipeline and energy infrastructure companies
- Rural water pipelines and municipalities
- Any organization, big or small, with buried infrastructure in Saskatchewan

More than 135 organizations of every size already subscribe! Join the growing list committed to safe digging and responsible asset management. With every new subscriber, we move closer to making Sask 1st Call your only call.

Questions? Email us at beforeyoudig@sask1stcall.com or visit www.sask1stcall.com to learn more. ●

Info-Excavation : innover pour mieux prévenir

Par Info-Excavation

Depuis plus de trente ans, Info-Excavation est le seul centre de prévention de dommages au Québec et, depuis neuf ans, étend son expertise aux provinces de l'Atlantique pour le traitement des demandes de localisation. Notre mission demeure la même : renforcer la sécurité sur les chantiers, faciliter le travail des intervenants en amont pour une meilleure planification et protéger les services essentiels pour les citoyens, tout en gardant à l'esprit les impacts environnementaux. En 2025, nos efforts se traduisent par de nouvelles avancées technologiques, des initiatives de communication novatrices et un accompagnement de terrain toujours plus soutenu.

UNE PLUS GRANDE FLEXIBILITÉ DANS LES PROVINCES DE L'ATLANTIQUE

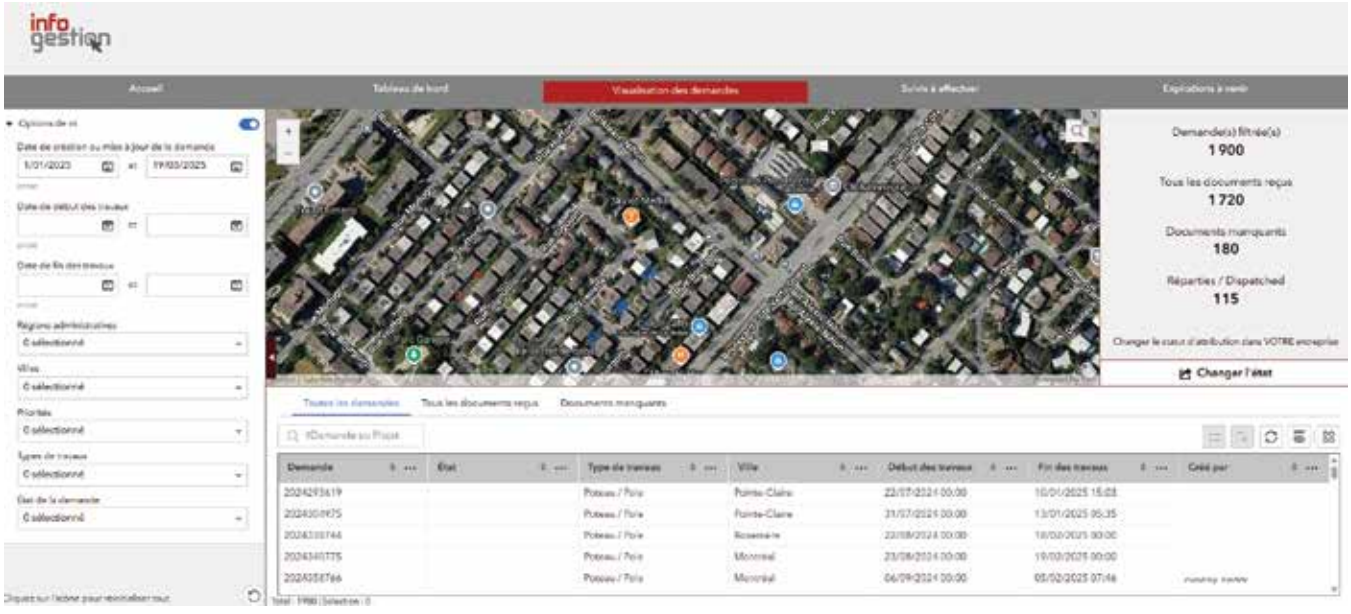
Cette année, une modification majeure a été adoptée pour les utilisateurs d'Info-Excavation dans l'Atlantique : le délai de validité des demandes de localisation est passé de 30 à 60 jours. Cette évolution offre davantage de flexibilité aux utilisateurs et soutient une meilleure planification et coordination des travaux dans toutes les provinces de la région.

INFO-RTU, TOUJOURS PLUS PERFORMANTE

Notre plateforme provinciale Info-RTU continue d'évoluer pour faciliter la planification et la coordination des projets dans l'emprise publique. Les rappels automatiques et la détection automatisée des possibilités de coordination sont des exemples d'amélioration permettant aux intervenants de mieux anticiper leurs travaux et de renforcer la concertation entre tous les acteurs. Ces améliorations concrètes contribuent directement à réduire les risques lors d'excavations multiples.

INFO-GESTION : UNE GESTION CENTRALISÉE ET VISUELLE

Lancée en mai 2025, Info-Gestion s'impose comme une application incontournable permettant une gestion simplifiée et visuelle des demandes de localisation grâce à une carte interactive qui affiche en temps réel l'état des demandes, les échéances



et les réponses des propriétaires d'infrastructures. Elle facilite la coordination des projets, améliore l'organisation des équipes et offre la possibilité d'exporter les données sous divers formats, contribuant à une gestion plus efficace et sécuritaire des travaux.

DES FORMATIONS RENOUVELÉES ET UNE NOUVELLE PLATEFORME IMMERSIVE

Toujours dans une optique de prévention, Info-Excavation a modernisé son offre de formation avec une toute nouvelle plateforme d'apprentissage plus interactive et intuitive. Cette refonte rend l'expérience plus enrichissante pour les participants et renforce la diffusion des bonnes pratiques d'excavation. Une nouvelle formation sera bientôt annoncée… Suivez-nous pour en savoir davantage!

LA PRÉVENTION DIRECTEMENT SUR LE TERRAIN

Pour une 6e année consécutive, nos préventionnistes ont parcouru le Québec jusqu'en octobre pour sensibiliser les travailleurs aux bonnes pratiques. Leur mission : visiter les chantiers comprenant de l'excavation, informer sur les rapports de localisation, présenter nos outils et formations, et sensibiliser les commerces qui louent des outils liés à l'excavation.

CREUSEZ LE SUJET! : NOTRE NOUVEAU BALADO

En complément de notre campagne annuelle de communication menée dans les grands centres en collaboration avec nos partenaires, Info-Excavation a lancé Creusez le sujet! propulsé par Bell, un balado accessible et facile à partager. Chaque épisode donne la parole à des invités de renom de l'industrie et aborde des thématiques concrètes liées à la prévention des dommages aux infrastructures souterraines. Ce format audio permet de sensibiliser autrement, en diffusant des conseils pratiques, des témoignages inspirants et des discussions enrichissantes disponibles gratuitement sur toutes les principales plateformes d'écoute.

Grâce à l'amélioration continue de ses outils numériques, à son engagement sur le terrain, à ses formations modernisées et à ses nouvelles initiatives de communication, Info-Excavation réaffirme sa volonté d'offrir aux professionnels un environnement de travail plus sécuritaire, mieux coordonné et durable pour l'avenir.

Pour en savoir davantage sur Info-Excavation, consultez notre site web au www.info-ex.com. ●

En complément de notre campagne annuelle de communication menée dans les grands centres en collaboration avec nos partenaires, Info-Excavation a lancé Creusez le sujet! propulsé par Bell, un balado accessible et facile à partager.

Info-Excavation: Innovating for better prevention

By Info-Excavation

For over 30 years, Info-Excavation has been the only damage prevention centre in Quebec and, for the past nine years, it has extended its expertise to the Atlantic provinces for handling locate requests. Our mission remains the same: to enhance safety on worksites, support stakeholders for better planning, and protect essential services for citizens, all while keeping environmental impacts in mind. In 2025, our efforts are reflected in new technological advancements, innovative communication initiatives, and ever-stronger field support.

GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

This year, a major change was implemented for Info-Excavation users in the Atlantic region: the validity period for locate requests increased from 30 to 60 days. This improvement provides users with greater flexibility and supports better planning and coordination of projects across all provinces in the region.

INFO-UCN: INCREASINGLY EFFICIENT

Our provincial platform, Info-UCN, continues to evolve to facilitate project planning and coordination in public rights-of-way. Automated reminders and the automated detection of coordination opportunities are examples of enhancements that help stakeholders anticipate their work and strengthen collaboration among all parties. These tangible improvements directly contribute to reducing risks during multiple excavation projects.

INFO-MANAGEMENT: CENTRALIZED AND VISUAL MANAGEMENT

Launched in May 2025, Info-Management has quickly become an essential tool, offering simplified and visual management of locate requests through an interactive map that displays request status, deadlines, and infrastructure owner responses in real time. The platform streamlines project coordination, improves team organization, and allows data export in multiple formats, contributing to safer and more efficient work management.

UPDATED TRAINING AND A NEW IMMERSIVE PLATFORM

Continuing our focus on prevention, Info-Excavation has modernized its training offering with a completely new, more interactive and intuitive learning platform. This redesign makes the experience more engaging for participants and reinforces the spreading of excavation best practices. A new training course will be announced soon…stay tuned for more details!

PREVENTION DIRECTLY IN THE FIELD

For the sixth consecutive year, our prevention representatives traveled across Quebec until October to raise awareness among workers about best practices. Their mission: visit excavation sites, provide information on locate reports, present our tools and training, and educate businesses that rent excavation-related equipment.

CREUSEZ LE SUJET! OUR NEW PODCAST

Complementing our annual communication campaign in major centres in collaboration with our partners, Info-Excavation launched *Creusez le sujet!* powered by Bell, an accessible and easily shareable podcast. Each episode features prominent industry guests and addresses concrete themes related to underground infrastructure damage prevention. This audio format raises awareness in a different way, offering practical advice, inspiring testimonials, and enriching discussions available for free on all major listening platforms.

Thanks to the continuous improvement of its digital tools, on-the-ground engagement, modernized training programs, and new communication initiatives, Info-Excavation reaffirms its commitment to providing professionals with a safer, better-coordinated, and sustainable work environment for the future.

For more information about Info-Excavation, please visit our website at www.info-ex.com. ●

Expert Support & Services, **All In One Place**

Cansel offers an extensive portfolio of field-to-finish subsurface technologies and utility locators that empower utility, construction, surveying, and engineering professionals to accurately detect, map, and manage underground utilities and structures for enhanced safety, efficiency, and decision-making.

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Our courses equip field professionals to locate utilities with accuracy, safety, and full compliance with industry standards.

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Train on your schedule. Access interactive modules, on-demand webinars, and video resources to stay current with the latest technologies.

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Elite Program

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Request an On-Site Demo

Explore our subsurface solutions.
Contact us and we will bring a demo to you.

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ATLCGA update

60-DAY LOCATE VALIDITY

Atlantic Canada Common Ground Alliance (ATLCGA) and underground facility owners voted to extend locate validity from 30 days to 60 days on November 21, 2024. The change came into effect on March 1, 2025, and facility owners, locators, and ground disturbers (excavators) have been benefiting from the extended validity period, fewer relocates, reduced cost and administrative burden.

CONTRACTOR BREAKFAST

During National Dig Safe Month, the ATLCGA hosted a contractor breakfast at the Liberty office in Moncton. This event was a great opportunity to meet and discuss industry best practices and we are looking forward to the next event – sign up for our newsletter for updates www.atlanticdigsafe.ca/Subscribe.

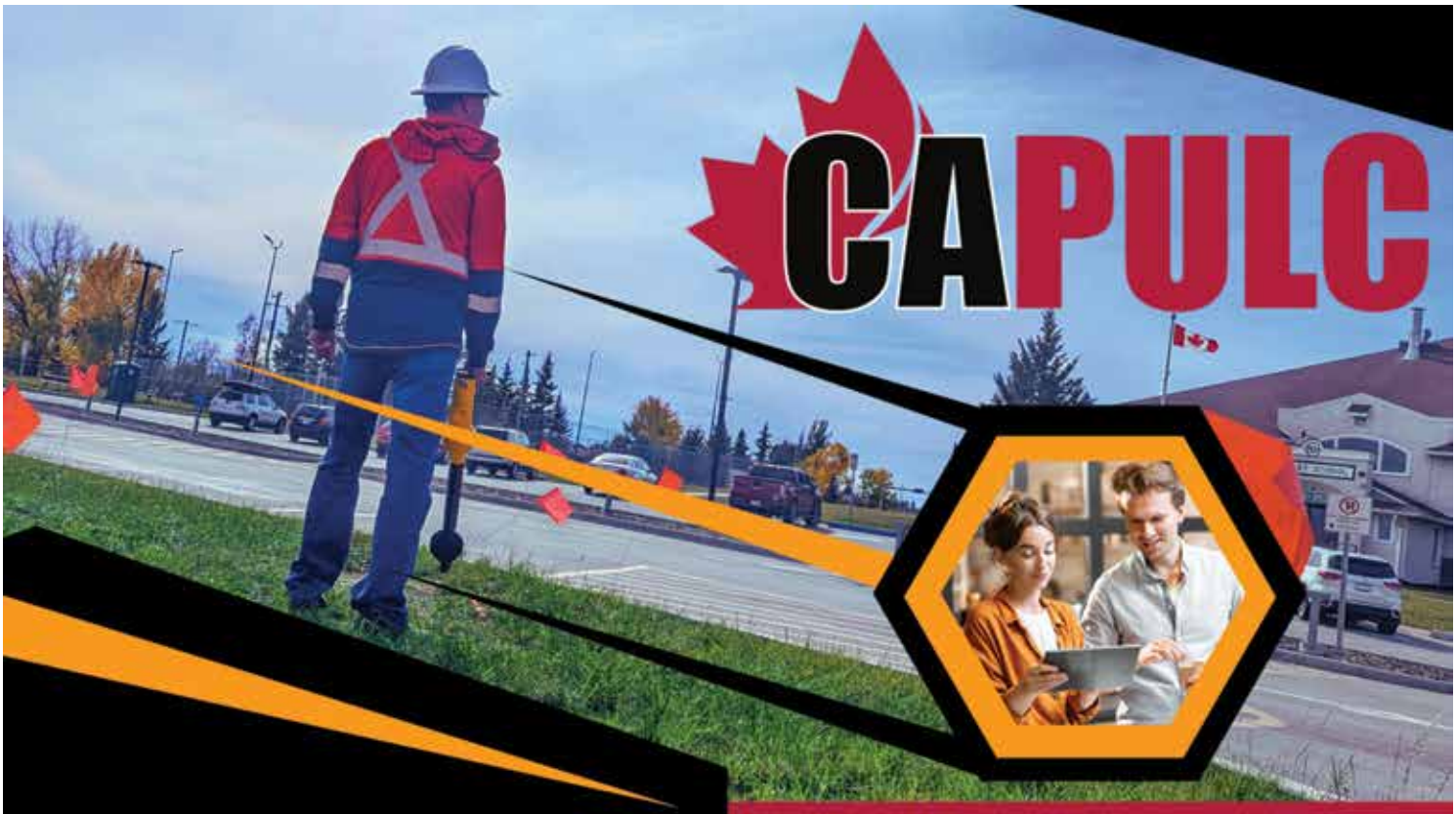
CONFERENCES

The ATLCGA promoted Click Before You Dig at the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS) De-Icer and the Municipal Public Works Association of Nova Scota (MPWANS) Spring Conference. Delegates got a chance to try out the new Dig Safe game designed to demonstrate the importance of having valid locates before you dig.

2025 NATIONAL DAMAGE PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM

The Canadian Common Ground Alliance (CCGA) Damage Prevention Symposium came to Halifax, November 4th to 6th, 2025. The ATLCGA is a regional partner of the CCGA, and we were excited to be hosting damage prevention experts and stakeholders from across Canada to connect, share insights and advance the damage prevention industry. For more information about this exciting event visit Canadian Common Ground Alliance – 2025 Symposium www.canadiancga.com/2025-Symposium.

To join the voice of damage prevention in Atlantic Canada, visit www.atlanticdigsafe.ca/en/Join or contact us at info@atlanticdigsafe.ca. ●



2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Where
Edmonton, AB

When
May 20, 2026
Watch for details!

Coming Soon

Stay Engaged!
Let's make this year one of connection, collaboration and community-building.

Keep advancing, learning and growing!

Email
admin@capulc.ca

Contact Us
1-888-492-8279

Website
www.capulc.ca

Redefining damage prevention with Locate Performance Management

By Radiodetection

Damages to buried utilities in the U.S. cost approximately $30 billion annually, according to the Common Ground Alliance, with Locating Practices consistently ranking among the top two root causes of these damages for the past three years. In Canada, more than 39.8 damages occurred per workday, according to the Canadian Common Ground Alliance.

The 2024 DIRT Report highlights that the industry needs more robust reporting and analysis tools to prevent these incidents. Every mislocate not only risks public safety and costly downtime but also impacts operational efficiency and reputation.

A NEW APPROACH TO LOCATE QUALITY ASSURANCE

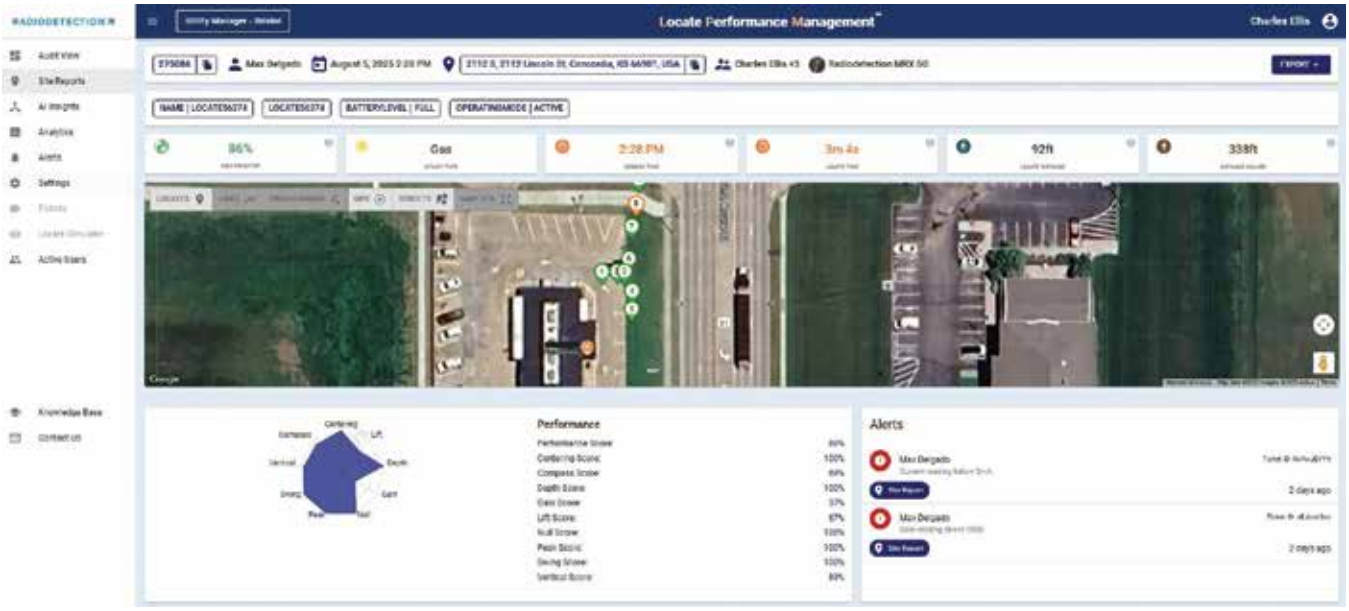
Locate Performance Management™ (LPM) is an integrated solution that combines hardware, software, and data intelligence to verify the quality of every locate in real time. Paired with Radiodetection's precision locators, it transforms locating into a measurable, verifiable process.

REDEFINING – HERO SCREEN

LPM enables field technicians to receive instant feedback on their work, helping them catch errors on-site – an opportunity for stakeholders to reduce damages due to utility strikes. Managers gain visibility across teams, enabling them to assess skills, reinforce best practices and uphold high safety standards.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Real-time Quality Scores and Alerts
  - — LPM notifies technicians of potential issues immediately, reducing the likelihood of utility strikes
- GNSS & Esri® ArcGIS® Integration
  - — High-accuracy GNSS devices pair with validation tools, while data flows directly into ArcGIS, eliminating manual entry errors and keeping maps current.
- Mapped Distance & Performance Metrics



By automating monitoring, issuing timely alerts, and generating audit-ready reports, LPM strengthens compliance efforts and ensures transparency across operations.

— Compare located distances with the actual distance walked and generate verifiable reports.

- Skill Development & Recognition
  — Data-driven insights reinforce correct techniques and help reward high-quality performance.

DRIVING INDUSTRY-WIDE IMPROVEMENT

The benefits of Locate Performance Management extend well beyond reducing damages.

By automating monitoring, issuing timely alerts, and generating audit-ready reports, LPM strengthens compliance efforts and ensures transparency across operations. It also drives operational efficiency by cutting down on repeat dispatches and minimizing strikes, which saves both time and money. Transparent billing data allows organizations to verify work completed, justify invoices, and eliminate disputes, ultimately building trust with customers and partners.

Equally important, LPM supports continuous improvement. AI analytics uncover trends, identify skill gaps and highlight training opportunities, helping organizations evolve their locating programs and reinforce best practices.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Cloud-Based: No PC installation required
- Mobile Compatibility: iOS (16+) and Android (13+)
- Supported Locators: RD8200SG, MRX SG, RD8200G, MRX G

By combining real-time accuracy, validated maps, and seamless data integration, Locate Performance Management enables the industry to shift from reactive damage control to proactive prevention – building a culture of accountability and excellence. ●

Understanding true accuracy in electromagnetic locating

By Gordon Campbell, Operations Manager, R&B Locating Inc.

Picture an archer, bow drawn, arrow cocked, eyes fixed on the target. Now imagine three different archers all standing in a line, each with their own approach to hitting the bullseye.

The first archer shoots arrow after arrow, creating a tight cluster of shots. Impressive consistency – every arrow lands within inches of the others. There's just one problem: the entire cluster sits two rings away from the bullseye. This archer has achieved precision without accuracy.

The second archer takes aim and occasionally hits a perfect bullseye, but the next shot might land anywhere on the target face. Sometimes dead centre, sometimes way off. This archer shows accuracy without precision.

The third archer draws back, releases, and sends arrow after arrow into the centre ring. Tight grouping, perfect placement. This archer has mastered both precision and accuracy.

THE PEAK TRAP

Here's where most locating mistakes happen, and it's exactly like that first archer who kept hitting the wrong spot with impressive consistency. Peak mode on your locating equipment gives you what feels like success. The signal is strong, the readings look consistent, and you get precise positioning over what appears to be your target. Your receiver's display looks confident, maybe even showing a good depth reading. Everything tells you that you've found your target.

But peak only gives you precise positioning of the magnetic field. It doesn't tell you which conductor it is or whether you're dealing with any sort of interference.

Peak will cheerfully provide precise positioning over bleed-off from parallel utilities, coupled signal or return path signals. And it will do so with the kind of consistency that makes you confident you're right.

THE DROP-IN DISASTER

The biggest mistake in electromagnetic locating is what we call "drop-in" locating. You hook up your transmitter, walk to the locate area where you expect to find your utility, and start hunting for a peak signal where you think it is. Consider a locate between two CATV peds. You expect the signal to be where it is, you can follow it between peds, but if you happen to bleed off onto the phone cable, you could have missed the CATV cable stepping out and crossing the driveway two metres away.

You see, your brain wants to find what you're looking for. When you drop into a locate area expecting a utility to run one way, and you find a strong peak running that way at what seems like the right depth, confirmation bias kicks in.

But bleed-off can create false signals exactly where you expect them. And these false signals often give you everything that looks right: consistent readings, logical paths, and reasonable depths.

THE PREFERRED LOCATE METHOD

Real accuracy requires following the utilities path, not just looking for where you need it. In electromagnetic locating, this means tracing your signal from the launch point all the way through your locate area to its termination point. Don't hunt for your target in the locate area; follow your target to the locate area.

Here's the workflow that prevents costly mistakes:

1. **Launch Point Verification:** Connect your transmitter and confirm you're energizing the correct utility by completing a circle check

2. **Continuous Trace:** Follow your peak signal from the connection point through the entire route to your locate area

3. **Three-point Verification:** Stop periodically and verify that peak, null, and current direction all align and confirm you're still on the target conductor

4. **Termination Verification:** Follow the signal to its endpoint and confirm it terminates where your target utility should end – at a pole, utility box, or known termination point

PEAK + NULL = TRUE ACCURACY

Peak mode is the most sensitive and accurate for locating purposes. Null mode usually refers to directional information and is used to verify a signal with little or no interference. It helps in checking for distortion before marking a point.

We should use null to confirm you're on the actual target conductor, not on bleed-off or coupled signal. It's the difference between precise placement on an unknown target versus accurate placement on the verified target.

That verification takes an extra 30 seconds but prevents strikes that cost thousands of dollars and put lives at risk.

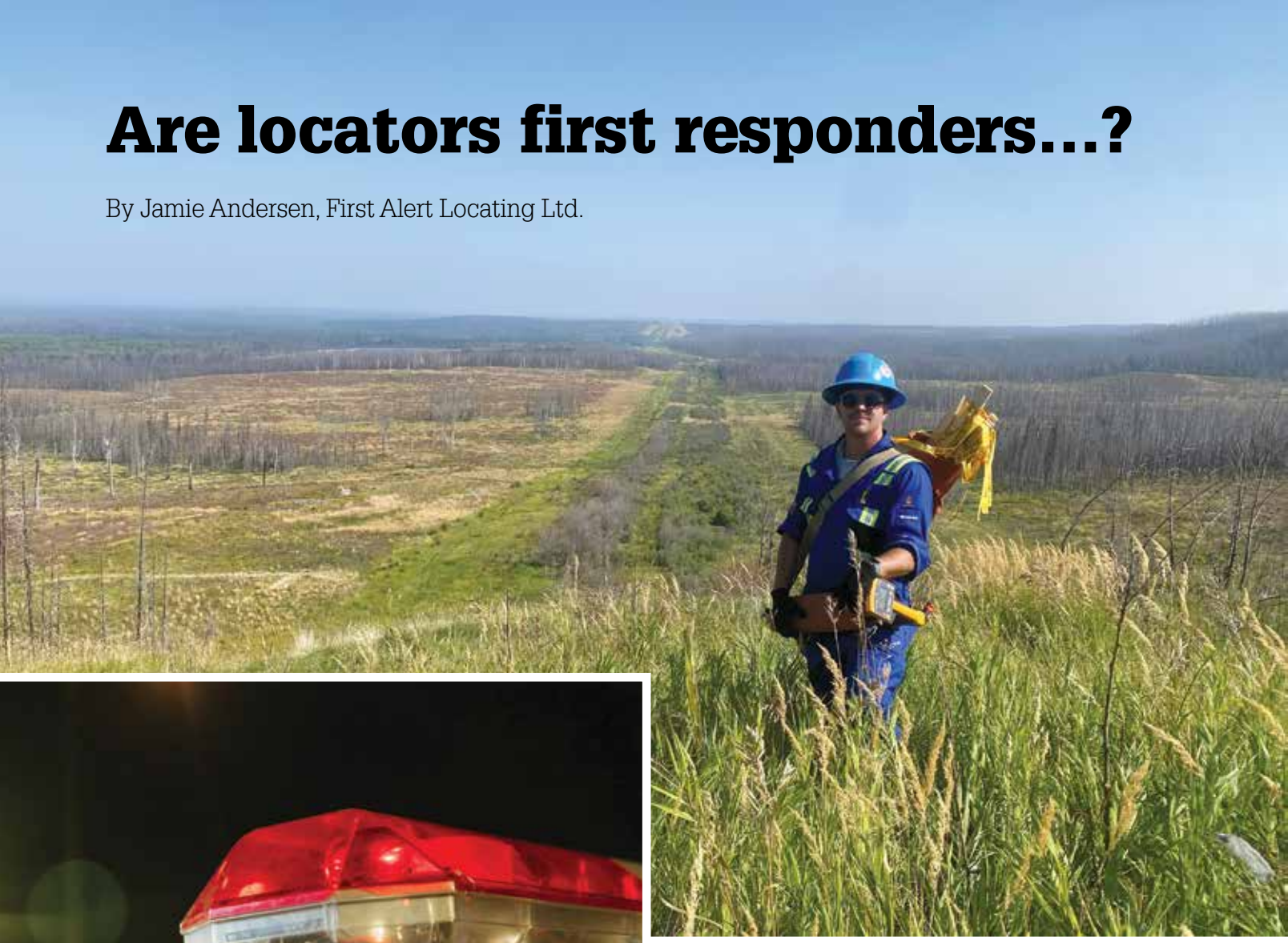
THE BOTTOM LINE

All regulations and standards call for "accurate locates," but they don't distinguish between precision and accuracy. Understanding the difference – and using both peak and null to achieve true accuracy – separates professional locators from those who just happen to be holding the equipment.

Don't be the archer who hits the wrong target with impressive consistency. Take the extra time to verify your target, trace the complete path, and confirm your endpoint. Your marks will be both precise and accurate, hitting the right bullseye every time. ●

Are locators first responders…?

By Jamie Andersen, First Alert Locating Ltd.



LOCATORS: ARE THEY CONSIDERED FIRST RESPONDERS?

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped how society views work, safety, and infrastructure. It was a wake-up call that redefined what it means to be "essential" – bringing attention to behind-the-scenes professionals who kept communities running. Utility locators quietly continued safeguarding underground infrastructure, ensuring the continuity of critical services like electricity, water, and telecommunications. Their reclassification as essential service providers highlighted the importance of their work – not just during emergencies, but in everyday operations that protect public safety. Yet despite their vital role, they remain largely absent from formal recognition as first responders. It's time to ask: Why not?

DEFINING A FIRST RESPONDER

Traditionally, first responders are those who arrive early at the scene of an emergency – firefighters, paramedics, police officers – trained to protect life, property, and the environment. In Canada, the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) defines a first responder as "a professional with specialized training who arrives at the scene of an emergency to provide immediate medical or evacuation help." This includes not only emergency medical services and law enforcement, but also public safety communicators and military personnel involved in emergency response.

Essential service and first responder roles share key characteristics: rapid deployment, specialized training, support critical infrastructure, the ability to operate under high-stress, time sensitive, high-risk conditions, and communicate or coordinate those efforts. Not to mention that both roles are deeply embedded in the communities they serve during emergencies and

day-to-day operations. When viewed through this lens, utility locators begin to fit the profile more closely than one might expect and may actually deserve recognition as part of the broader emergency response and essential services ecosystem.

LOCATORS IN ACTION: REAL EMERGENCY DEPLOYMENTS

Utility locators are not just working behind the scenes – they are actively deployed during emergencies:

- Middle-of-the-night house fires: Locators are called to identify underground gas lines that may pose further risk or need to be shut off.
- Forest fires: When power poles and communication lines are destroyed, locators help restore critical infrastructure by mapping underground systems.
- Gas leaks and evacuations: During city block evacuations, locators are dispatched to locate and isolate gas lines, enabling safe repairs and preventing further hazards.
- Vehicle Accidents: When a vehicle strikes a power pole or other infrastructure, locators are on hand to locate live electrical wires, compromised utilities (gas, water, telecom, etc.) and immediate safety assessments must be made prior to repair crews being able to begin work.

Despite these high-stakes scenarios, locators respond without sirens, escorts, or formal recognition – yet their role is undeniably urgent and essential.

MAKING THE CASE FOR LOCATORS

Locators are often the first line of defense against infrastructure disasters. Here's why their role deserves first responder status:

- Public Safety: Locators identify underground hazards – gas lines, electrical cables, water mains, and more – before they become threats. Their work directly prevents explosions, outages, and environmental damage.
- Damage Prevention: Accurate marking of utilities before excavation helps avoid costly and dangerous accidents and outages. This proactive approach protects both workers and the public.
- Emergency Response: After natural disasters, locators assess underground systems for damage, guiding repair crews and helping restore essential services.
- Infrastructure Maintenance: Their expertise enables safe access to active infrastructure, ensuring continuity of power, water, and communication.
- Time Sensitivity: Like traditional first responders, locators work under tight deadlines. Delays can mean service disruptions or public hazards.
- Specialized Training: Locators are trained to read utility maps, operate electromagnetic equipment, and interpret complex underground networks.

These responsibilities mirror the core functions of emergency personnel. So why aren't locators formally recognized as such?

PREPARING LOCATORS FOR A FORMAL ROLE

To bridge the gap, we must equip locators with the tools and training needed to operate seamlessly alongside other emergency responders:

- Training in Incident Command Systems (ICS): Familiarity with ICS protocols allows locators to integrate into coordinated emergency responses.
- Enhanced Equipment: Beyond standard protective equipment, locators could benefit from respiratory protection, reliable emergency communication tools (radios, satellite phones) and mobile mapping devices (tables, GPS units, integrated GIS, digital camera or drones) paired with proper training and certification.
- Emergency Response Kits: First aid supplies, fire extinguishers, signaling devices, and specialized tools could be standard issue.
- Environmental Monitoring: Portable sensors for gas leaks, chemical exposure, or moisture or soil stability would add another layer of safety and responsiveness.

Certification programs tailored to emergency utility response could formalize their role and ensure readiness for high-stake situations.

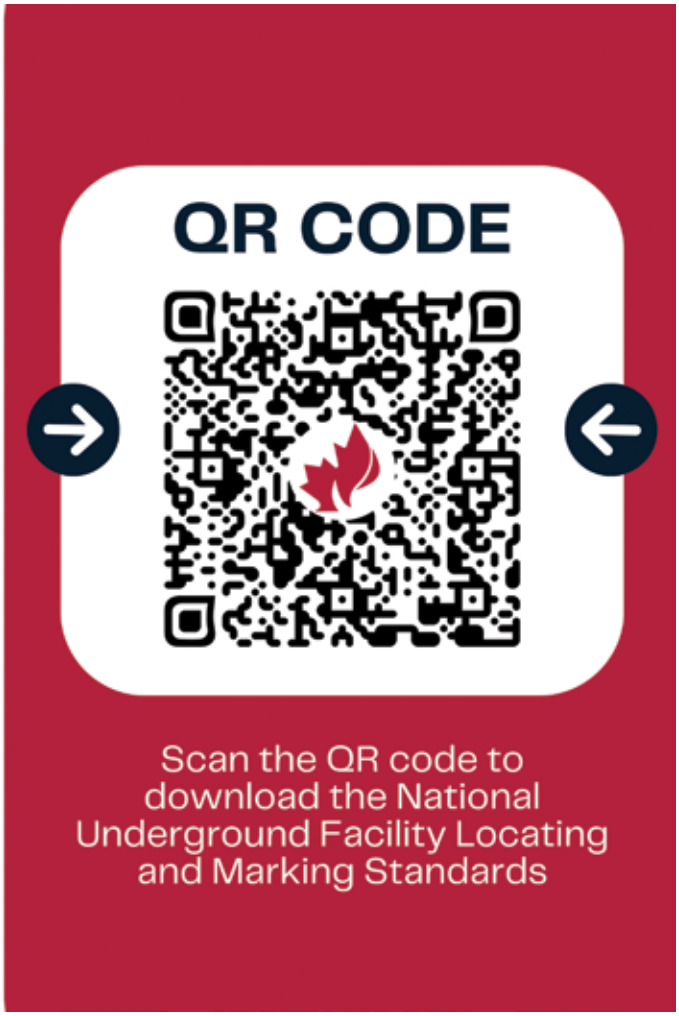
CONCLUSION: RECOGNITION AND READINESS

Locators already perform many duties aligned with first responders. With additional training, equipment, and formal recognition, they could become an integral part of emergency response teams. Their work is vital, their expertise unmatched – and their inclusion overdue. ●

News from CAPULC Silver Sponsor GDM Inc.

GDM has a new Municipal Boundaries data layer in Converge, combining infrastructure insights with population growth patterns so municipalities and energy companies work from the same source of truth, ensuring communities are built with foresight, safety, and fairness. Converge also has a new Crown/Freehold surface data layer to better understand land access and current and future land use (e.g., class location changes). GDM has also just announced a strategic alliance with Muddy Boots Inc. to better connect field and office teams for better pipeline integrity data management.

For more information you can contact GDM at gdm-inc.com/contact/. ●



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Locator certification – Let's be accurate

By Donald Richard, VP, Locate Management Institute

DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

For more than 15 years, I have observed the locating and damage prevention industries struggle with inaccurate or vague definitions of locator certificates, certification, competency, and qualifications which has led to limited advocacy for locator certification programs.

To be accurate, there are important distinctions over the most often-confused terms certificate and certification.

- Certificate – verifies an individual complete a course or courses
- Certification – verifies that an individual has met a set of requirements or standards determined by a third-party assessment

CERTIFICATES MAY BE ISSUED TO MARK

- Attendance at a course or event
- Completion of a program
- Achievement of specific requirements (e.g., field assessment)

Training certificates (with some organizations misleadingly defining these as certifications) do not guarantee that the learner:

- Will obtain all the pertinent knowledge
- Can demonstrate the entire breadth of skills
- Can apply the knowledge and skills safely and properly in real-world situations

PARTICIPATION BADGES

We often wrongly assume that when a person obtains a certificate that they are competent. A person may have received an educational certificate or designation, but that doesn't mean they are competent. For example, a person may obtain a teaching degree; however, it does not mean that the person is competent teaching in a classroom. A person may receive a certificate for locator training on direct connection methods, but that doesn't provide them with the knowledge or skills to solve tracing problems or overcome locating obstacles.

I often get asked, "What certification do I receive after completing your course?". My response has always been and will always be "You don't get a certification. You get a certificate – a participation badge – stating that you attended or completed a course". Employers should be leery of training providers offering certification upon course completion.

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

Some people think that certification is an entry point into locating or that certification is a one-time event, but that is not a true meaning of certification. A training program that provides foundational knowledge and skills is the entry point into locating. A standardized, independent, and unbiased locator certification program that culminates in a field assessment aims to ensure that a locator can use their skills to deliver optimum locating results regardless of employer or location. This benchmark, of ensuring a more competent locating workforce, has been proven financially successful by reducing damage to the underground infrastructure.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Certification requires substantial field knowledge and skills and should not be considered a part of initial industry education and training. Certification recognizes the locator's ability to perform identifiable and quantifiable tasks. To maintain certification, an individual needs to be re-assessed or provide proof of continuing education (e.g., continuing education units or C.E.U.s) to the awarding organization, at set intervals. Most industries commonly link a designation (i.e., a name or title) with a certification to distinguish an individual from their industry peers.

COMPETENCY

Competence means successful demonstration of all competencies in the required criteria. The training program used to train a locator doesn't determine an individual's locating competency.

A certificate of competency (COC), also known as a certificate of competence, is certification verifying that a person can perform a task or specific set of tasks safely and skillfully. Certifica-

tion is dependent on successful demonstration of these tasks. Regular assessment can identify any gaps.

MEASURE TO A BENCHMARK

Some employers will reason not to trust a third party in deeming their employees competent. They will determine their own level of competency. But who is deeming that employer competent or that they have the in-house expertise to do so? Are they stating their own competency based on their own self-assessment? Are they deeming their competency level is superior to an industry standard/benchmark? How are they determining that?

It is possible that an employer may have a superior program, but, at the very least, they need to measure against a benchmark/standard because not all employers will deem competency to the same level nor will they have the expertise to educate, train, or assess to such a benchmark/standard.

BEYOND CERTIFICATION

Attending a locator training course doesn't necessarily qualify a person to locate for a particular company. Successfully completing a competency-based locator certification program may not mean a person is qualified to perform all required locating tasks under all conditions for all work assignments. An employer will need to educate, train, and assess beyond the benchmark/standard.

For example, a locator may require several training tickets (e.g., WHMIS, H2S, First Aid) or learn specific process or procedures to work for a specific client. A locator field benchmark/assessment should evaluate knowledge, skills, and behaviour for locating and marking underground facilities, not how to perform respond to a request from a notification centre, or how not to perform a company-specific process.

Therefore, it's imperative that employers include education, training, and assessment beyond a benchmark/standard to deem a person qualified. This includes measuring behavioural (e.g., people-based, and success-based) competencies at regular intervals.

While employers must ensure competency and qualification, most industries (e.g., airline, construction, electrical, human resources, information technology, marketing, medical, project management, quality assurance) recognize certification. It is time for the locating and damage prevention industries to do the same. ●

Damage Prevention Professional Certificate Program…It's time!

By Jeff Mulligan, Chair,
USP Training Standards Committee,
Chief Operating Officer, ASTEC SAFETY Inc.

I came from the financial services and municipal government sectors, where legislation, regulatory oversight, and clearly delineated specialist designations were commonplace. Not that when I entered the industrial safety space we were wanting for more regulations, rules, or fancy titles; however, as I got a clearer and almost laser-focused view of the damage prevention landscape, something was missing.

THE PEOPLE…

Yes, when it came to damage prevention professionals, I struggled to discern a highly qualified professional from the pack, could not identify their specific area of expertise, nor what they had achieved enroute claiming the title/role of a damage prevention professional. At the same time, a wide array of professional designations and certifications were embraced by the industrial safety and occupational health sectors. Dedicated long-term practitioners of damage prevention seemed almost homeless, simply looking for the recognition and career path options of many of their industry peers.

THE BUSINESS CASE…

So that is the emotional or personal connection many might have to the concept of the Damage Prevention Professional Certificate, but the real driver is an exploding (pardon the pun) era of invaluable mission-critical buried infrastructure that we all have a shared responsibility to care for – billions of dollars, countless lives, and practically everyone relying on the undisturbed preservation of the foundational services provided by this buried infrastructure we take for granted everyday in our modern society.

What we see is a rapidly evolving infrastructure environment that will be best protected by trained, qualified, and passionate damage prevention professionals. It's the crossroads, if you will, that is calling us to come together to elevate the profile of both the industry and the competency of the people who dedicate themselves to enhancing the best practices employed when working near buried infrastructure.

THE PROGRAM…

Enter this idea that like many professional associations, certificate programs, and approving organizations independently administering a certification program based on criteria and prerequisites are defined by the best in the industry. The program structure ensures that those persons achieving accreditation have exceeded the requirements while continuing to satisfy the on-going professional development standards set out by industry leaders. This is the vision of Utility Safety Partners (USP) and their stakeholders when describing the Damage Prevention Professional Certification Program "DPP".

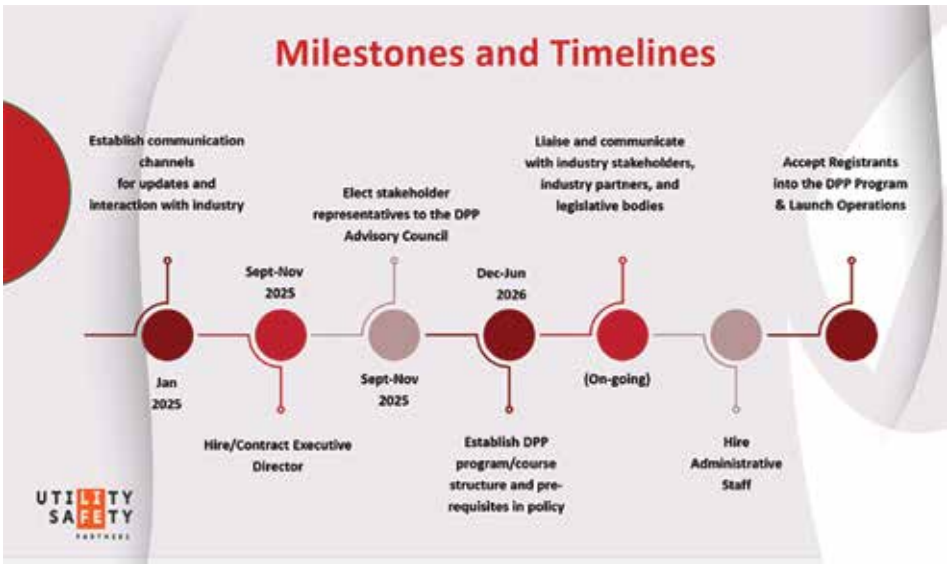
Operating under the guidance and governance of an elected stakeholder advisory group, USP personnel will develop, market, and administer the three-pillar professional designation program. The program will feature core/required subject area courses, augmented by electives that are discipline-specific defined by stakeholder group or buried asset type (i.e.: telecom vs. oil & gas, or excavators & contractors, locators, or perhaps shallow vs. deep, or regulators & government, to name a few).

Of course, obtaining a certificate because at some point in time you satisfied static curriculum requirements is good, but not great. Many programs today call for ongoing professional commitment evidenced by continuing professional development, participation in the organization, or competency milestones. It's our vision for the Damage Prevention Professional Certification Program that the third pillar will be the accumulation of required CEU credits on an on-going basis to maintain the program certification designation.

The program must be independent of for-profit corporate motives and/or government grant funding sources, both of which are subject to influences that could adversely affect the ongoing integrity or focus of the Damage Prevention Professional Certificate Program that so many individuals and corporations will come to count on as the program matures. This is why the evolution of USP as a damage prevention organization is both timely and purposeful to assume the administrative lead. Today, Utility Safety Partners has operating relationships with partners in Western Canada, with envisioned benefits extending from the Damage Prevention Professional Certification Program across Canada, into the United States, and with application as far away as Australia. Industry leaders say yes, regulators say yes, with many damage prevention professionals jumping on board.

Balancing the need for the DPP program to maintain reasonable personnel expenditures and a realistic workload to achieve certification is foundational to the future success of the program. With the program comprised of six to 10 core required courses, and up to four prerequisite electives, largely completed through online, self-paced, interactive training programs, we envision damage prevention specialists with one to three years of experience should realize full certification with approximately 100 hours of course completion. This will be followed by eight to 16 hours of prerequisite activity engagement per year thereafter to maintain their Damage Prevention Professional Certification.

Where do the courses come from that form the curriculum? The topic areas or content focus areas will be defined by the stakeholder advisory group, who will oversee the USP personnel that comprise the administrative team dedicated to the DPP program. The DPP program will leverage the expertise of the Training Standards Committee, when necessary, to develop "training standards" for required courses. Once published, the standards clearly define the content that professional training organizations utilized when they choose to develop training programs for assessment through the three-stage audit process leading to full "USP Training Program Endorsement".



THE TIMELINE...

We already said, "It's Time", and maybe it's even overdue, so we need to come together to sustain industry-wide momentum, supported by employers, contractors, regulators, and infrastructure owners alike to take a monumental leap forward in the certification of our most scarce resources: the damage prevention professionals of today and tomorrow!

Over the next 12 to 18 months, stay tuned for updates, activities, milestones, and most importantly, how you or your organization can become active partners in the Damage Prevention Professional Certification program. It's time for our people, our industry, and our future!

jmulligan@astecsafety.com
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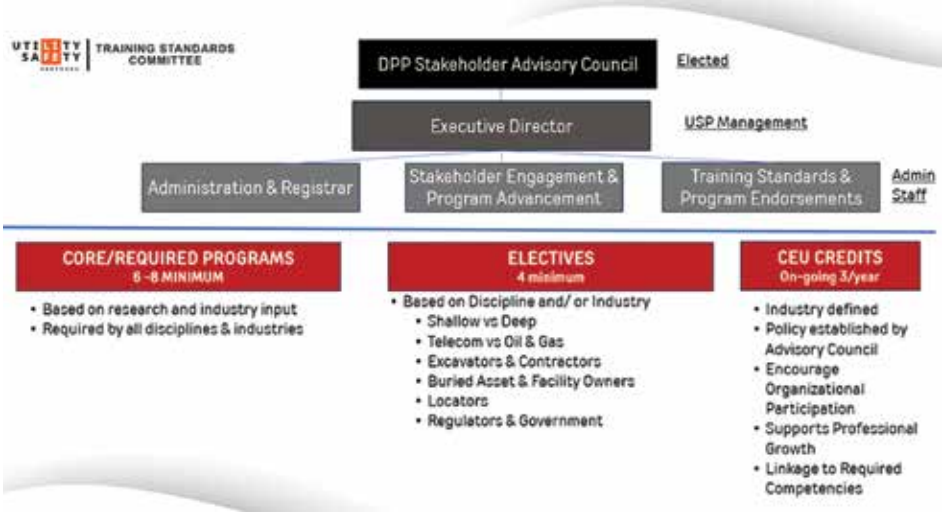

UAV imagery integrated with GPR array data completes the above- and below-ground digital twin

By Matthew J. Wolf, President, ImpulseRadar USA, Inc.

UAVs certainly have made headlines of late for many reasons and are growing in popularity from hobbyists to professionals alike. The advent of smaller, lighter UAVs has revolutionized the geospatial survey profession as the systems have evolved from very large, expensive aircraft to more affordable compact but highly capable platforms. The impact of UAVs is far reaching in terms of saving field time to survey large areas for many applications, including search and rescue, agriculture, vegetation encroachment, forestry surveys, and many more. A rapidly growing segment is UAV deployment for infrastructure surveys as the precision and accuracy with onboard GNSS systems, coupled with inertial measurement tech, provides survey-grade results from a drone. Sending survey crews out to map large areas of terrain, for example, is getting to be a rare assignment since a UAV with a compact LiDAR payload can cover vast areas very quickly to produce a Digital Terrain Model (DTM) or topographic map.

Figure 1. ImpulseRadar Raptor 18-channel high speed MCGPR array.

The cost of UAVs and simplicity of operation in the field are driving more companies that map underground and above-ground utilities to embrace the technology. The benefits of using a UAV for utility mapping are compelling. A short list of benefits includes reduced survey time to record existing utility features and appurtenances, ability to survey Pipe and Cable Locator (PCL) and GPR utility marks on the ground, reduction of errors caused by confusion of dense utility corridor marks that have many intersections, and legacy images archived of the site once the paint marks fade or are destroyed.

The use of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) arrays (Figure 1), also referred to multi-channel GPR (MCGPR), is growing as well for many of the same reasons as UAVs, and that is efficiency of data collection and the ability to resolve complex networks. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 38-22 Standard Guideline for Investigating and Documenting Existing Utilities incorporates GPR multi-channel arrays (MCGPR) in the revised and updated standard for 3D subsurface deliverables. The benefits of MCGPR are well established as the leading system can collect data at posted speed limits and processing takes minutes to produce a 3D image of the underground assets detectable with GPR (Figure 2).

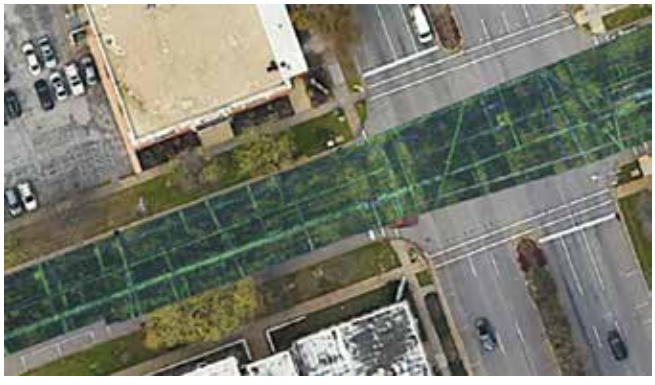

Figure 2. ImpulseRadar Raptor 18-channel OspreyView image.

In a previous article, the author demonstrated the power of uploading the ImpulseRadar OspreyView visualization of MCPR data in Esri ArcGIS® Field Maps. Field Maps allows the locate techs, survey team, or the project engineers to walk the site with cm or better precision with their smart phone coupled to an RTK GPS. This configuration allows these teams to view the subsurface utilities from the MCGPR survey under their feet. Other layers, such as marks from either GPR or a PCL depicted in a CAD drawing, may also be viewed.

The next logical level is to combine high-resolution imagery from a UAV of the site to augment the interpretation of the MCGPR data. Ortho photogrammetry is not a new concept for aerial mapping and has been around since the mid twentieth century. Today, most large-scale aerial imagery is collected from fixed-wing aircraft at reasonably high altitudes and is not tailored to the scale and resolution of a project site. Additionally, one can easily see that at most sites zooming in with Google Earth or other publicly available imagery to the scale necessary to map features on the ground is impossible, as the image becomes pixelated and unreadable. The accuracy of Google Earth is also one metre at best and cannot be used as a reliable overlay to other survey-controlled data sets. UAVs, such as the popular WISPR Sky Scout 2, accept multiple payloads including LiDAR, cameras and other sensors. Field operation with the controller is nearly completely automated in that once the project site mission parameters are set in just minutes, the UAV simply takes off and lands itself. Data retrieval is as easy as removing an SD card. Equipped with a Sony ILX-LR1 61 MP camera, the resulting orthophotos result in not only a high-resolution image of valve covers, paint markings, and other utility features but are clear enough to read the markings/labels on these features. This is even possible from altitudes at 60 or more meters! (Figure 3).

Orthophoto data collection is not akin to simply flying a drone over the site and taking pictures. Ortho photos are a series of GNSS-positioned individual photos that are stitched together to form an ortho mosaic that is a composite of several tens, or in some cases, hundreds of UAV aerial photos. Algorithms to produce these ortho images utilize check points and ground control points, resulting in ortho mosaic accuracy to a few centimetres' accuracy. Processing software, such as Pix4D, has streamlined workflows to treat the data from the raw field images to a survey-grade ortho very quickly. The software can also process the imagery into survey-grade 3D models creating a virtual reality capture of the site. The 3D digital model is the above-ground portion of the digital twin.

The following data examples validate the power of combining the ortho imagery and the Raptor MCGPR 3D underground data at a project site to both aid interpretation and document all facilities both above and below ground. The site consists of an abandoned retail shopping area scheduled for redevelopment providing the perfect backdrop to collect the data. The area was scanned with the Raptor 45 18-channel system in one-tenth the time as a 2D GPR system. The same area was flown with the WISPR Sky Scout. Set up for the UAV and preflight mission

Figure 3. WISPR Sky Scout with Sony Camera payload at project site and high-resolution image of water valve taken from 60 metres altitude.

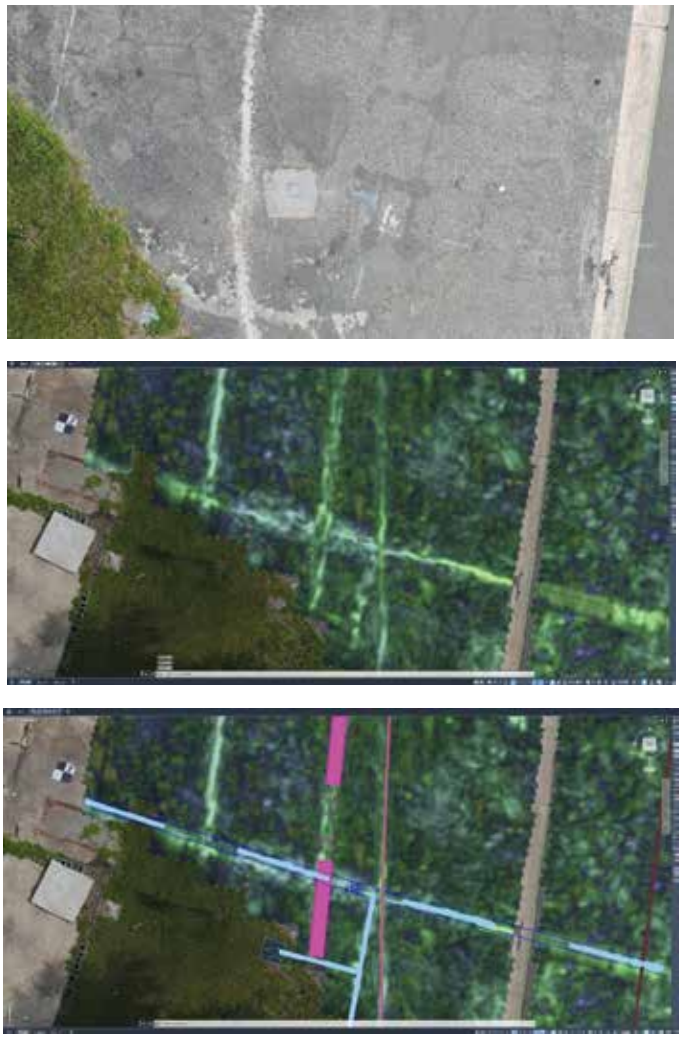

Figure 4. Portion of project site interpreted as QLB. a) Orthoimage altitude 60-metres; b) OspreyView subsurface image; c) Civil 3D interpretation line data for final CAD.

planning was 15 minutes. Flight time to cover the area is seven minutes.

After the data were collected and processed in Condor 3D GPR software as an OspreyView image and the corresponding ortho photomosaic generated from Pix4D, both images were exported into Autodesk Civil 3D. The CAD technician was able to clearly see both the surface features and how they aligned with the OspreyView subsurface utility images. It's important to note that both data sets are within a couple of centimetres of accuracy allowing confidence in the alignments. This facilitated identification of the imaged underground utility by relating it to the above-ground relevant feature, such as a manhole or valve cover (Figure 4). The imaging removes any second guessing of the CAD tech versus importing just line data from the traditional survey methods.

For any geospatial data utilized for a deliverable, it's important that a standard is used to evaluate the integrity and accuracy of any survey data. This is especially important for any PLS or PE that is the responsible person in charge of a project that has to sign off on the drawings. The American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS) Positional Accuracy Standards for Digital Geospatial Data, Edition 2, Version 2 (2024) outline the industry standards required for ortho photogrammetry, as well as LiDAR survey data. These standards cover all aspects of control and validation of the georeferenced images to the standards and are an invaluable resource for any operator of UAVs for any remote sensing data.

As with any tech, there are limitations to its use and there is never a one-size-fits-all approach to creating your project digital twin. Operation of a UAV is regulated in the US under the Federal Aviation Administration Part 107. Commercial operators must be licensed under Part 107. Certain areas, such as those close to airports or other government installations, are restricted within a certain radius to any UAV operation unless a waiver is granted.

To map utility features or utilities marked on the ground, tree canopy or other vegetation can conceal these areas so the use of a total station will be necessary at portions of the site. Regardless of these limitations, the streamlined workflows and efficiency now available with these tools reduce field time substantially, even if only a portion of the worksite is suitable.

The capacity to map the world as a digital twin is now within reach as a standard for all deliverables, as the cost of UAVs and 3D imaging MCGPR are now in reach of many operations and budgets for the end client. It's only a matter of time before these tech platforms are universal, and the days of using a Total Station, PCL and a 2D GPR as the only available option at many project sites are numbered. ●

As with any tech, there are limitations to its use and there is never a one-size-fits-all approach to creating your project digital twin. Operation of a UAV is regulated in the US under the Federal Aviation Administration Part 107.

GPS-enabled locating: Best practices for accurate records and efficient workflows

The Challenge Facing Modern Locators

By Kieren Tinning, TerraFlow/Cancel

Canadian locators face increasing pressure to deliver faster, more accurate results while managing ever increasing infrastructure complexity. Every day, damage prevention professionals move through a complex workflow: thorough field investigation, precise marking, detailed documentation, all with tight timelines. Meanwhile, facility owners struggle with incomplete or outdated records that make locating more challenging and riskier.

GPS-enabled locating tools offer a solution, but only when implemented thoughtfully. This article outlines practical strategies for leveraging GPS technology to improve locate accuracy, generate reliable records, and build safer, more efficient workflows.

WHY GPS MATTERS BEYOND JUST COORDINATES

Many locators think of GPS as simply capturing coordinates – it's useful for mapping but not essential for day-to-day work. This assumption misses the bigger picture; GPS technology integrated into locating workflows delivers several critical benefits:

Real-time navigation – Navigate directly to previously located positions or asset locations without searching through sketches or relying on memory. This is particularly valuable for callbacks, seasonal work, or when covering routes normally handled by other locators.

Instant verification – Confirm you are marking the right asset in the right location by comparing your current position against facility records or previous locates. This reduces mismarks and helps prevent costly damages.

Access to as-built records – Field applications that support both locate and as-built capture workflows provide locators with immediate access to construction records, installation photos, and design documents directly at the job site. This historical context helps locators understand what should be underground and identify discrepancies between records and field conditions.

Automatic documentation – Capture locate paths, mark positions, and site conditions without manual measurements or post-job data entry. This eliminates transcription errors and saves significant time.

Walk-back capability – Return to exact previous mark positions for re-marking during seasonal changes, after construction, or when marks have degraded. Instead of re-locating from scratch, you are verifying and refreshing existing work.

Quality proof – Demonstrate locate thoroughness and accuracy with timestamped, georeferenced records. This protects both you and your client when questions arise about locate completeness.

BEST PRACTICES FOR GPS-ENABLED FIELD LOCATING

Start With Equipment Integration

Modern GPS-enabled locators can integrate positioning data directly into your electromagnetic locator. This eliminates the need to juggle multiple devices. Systems like the Radiodetection 8200SG and Vivax Metrotech RTK Pro offer excellent integrated solutions that combine electromagnetic locating with high-accuracy GPS positioning in a single unit.

Mobile applications designed specifically for utility locating, such as TerraFlow Mobile, can run on tablets, phones, or rugged devices, allowing crews to capture GNSS data on site using standardized symbols while attaching photos and creating complete records.

For work in remote areas with limited or no cellular coverage, such as the far north or oil sands regions, add-on GPS receivers like EOS or Trimble units can extend the capabilities of integrated systems. These external receivers provide reliable positioning where built-in GPS may struggle, ensuring consistent data capture regardless of location.

When evaluating tools, ensure that your GPS system:

- Provides accuracy appropriate for utility locating (typically 10 to 15 centimetres for standard work, sub five centimetres for critical applications)
- Works reliably in challenging environments like urban canyons or tree cover
- Integrates with your existing locate equipment and workflow
- Captures data without slowing down your locate process
- Functions effectively in remote areas where cellular connectivity is limited or unavailable

Establish Consistent Capture Protocols

The most common locating mistake is inconsistent data collection. Your team should agree on standard practices:

What to capture – Define what data points matter: utility crossings, changes in direction, depth measurements, surface features, obstacles. Capture these consistently on every locate.

When to capture – Decide whether you're capturing every few metres along a continuous run or only at key points. Consistency matters more than capturing everything.

How to mark features – Use standardized symbols and naming conventions. If one technician marks a valve as "V-123" and another uses "Valve 123," your records become difficult to search and analyze. Pre-set templates within your field application help enforce consistency – ensuring all record capture is accurate, repeatable, and reliable across your entire team.

Quality checks – Verify GPS signal quality before starting. Most systems show accuracy indicators – don't capture data when accuracy is poor unless you flag it for later verification.

Leverage Walk-Back Functionality

One of GPS technology's most practical features is the ability to walk back to previous positions. This is invaluable for:

- **Seasonal re-marking –** Return to spring locate positions in fall without re-locating
- **Post-construction verification –** Check if utilities were avoided as marked
- **Quality audits –** Supervisors can verify technician accuracy by walking back to marked positions
- **Training –** New locators can follow experienced locators' paths to understand optimal techniques

To use walk-back effectively, maintain your device's GPS database and ensure previous locates are accessible in the field, not just archived in the office.

Document Challenging Conditions

GPS-enabled systems let you capture photos, notes, and audio tied to specific locations. Use this capability to document:

- Areas where signal quality was poor or locating was difficult
- Suspected unmapped utilities or discrepancies between records and field findings
- Surface conditions that may affect future locates (construction, new pavement, landscaping changes)
- Recommendations for facility owners regarding record updates or field verification needs

This documentation protects you professionally and helps improve system records over time.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RECORD GENERATION

Capture Once, Use Multiple Times

Traditional workflows create duplicate effort: locate the utility, mark it, sketch it, then transcribe data into multiple systems. GPS-enabled workflows eliminate this redundancy.

When you capture locate data digitally in the field, that same information can feed:

- Work order systems (prove completion, document time on site)
- GIS databases (update facility owner records)
- Sketches and drawings (generate standardized locate documents)

- Analytics systems (measure productivity, identify high-risk areas)

Purpose-built field applications can streamline this process significantly. Systems like TerraFlow Mobile are designed to capture data once in the field and automatically distribute it to multiple downstream systems – GIS platforms, CAD drawings, utility sketches, and raw data repositories – eliminating manual re-entry and reducing errors.

Additionally, applications that support both as-built and locate workflows create a continuous record lifecycle. Construction crews capture installation data during the build phase, which then becomes immediately available to locators during future locate requests. This means locators can reference original installation photos, depth measurements, and construction notes directly on their mobile device while in the field – providing context that significantly improves locate accuracy and confidence.

The key is ensuring your field collection system integrates with downstream systems. Work with your software vendor to establish automated data flows rather than manual re-entry.

Prioritize Accuracy Over Speed Initially

When first implementing GPS-enabled locating, teams often rush to capture data quickly. This creates poor quality records that undermine the entire system. Instead:

- Take time to capture accurate positions, even if it initially slows you down
- Verify that marks, GPS positions, and field observations align
- Review data before leaving the site when possible
- Establish quality benchmarks and measure against them

Speed comes naturally as locators become proficient. Prioritizing accuracy from the start builds good habits and trustworthy records.

DESIGN FOR FUTURE USERS

Your field records will not just be used by you – They will be referenced by other locators, facility owners, engineers, and excavators, potentially years later. Design records with this in mind:

Context matters – Capture nearby landmarks, offset measurements from permanent features, and surface references that will remain identifiable over time

Clarity is critical – Use clear, professional terminology and standard symbols. Avoid abbreviations that might be unclear to others

Photos tell stories – Include photos showing the broader site context, not just close-ups of marks. Future users need to understand the environment

Note uncertainties – If you're uncertain about something, document it clearly. "Approximate location based on limited access" is more valuable than a precise-looking mark that might be wrong.

IMPLEMENT VERSION CONTROL

As sites change and records get updated, maintaining version control becomes essential. Your system should:

- Timestamp all captures with date, time, and technician identification
- Preserve historical data rather than overwriting it
- Allow users to view current conditions alongside previous locates
- Flag when records conflict or show significant changes

This historical record helps identify patterns (like utilities that drift from documented positions) and protects against liability questions.

INTEGRATION AND WORKFLOW OPTIMIZATION

Bridge Field and Office Systems

The greatest efficiency gains come from seamless integration between field collection and back-office systems. Cloud-based platforms, such as TerraFlow's Data Engine, can act as a bridge between field teams and enterprise systems, providing scalable storage, advanced drawing functionality, and seamless data exchange between field apps and GIS or CAD platforms.

Work with your software providers to establish:

Automated synchronization – Data flows from field devices to central systems without manual intervention

Two-way communication – Field locators access current facility records while office staff see real-time field updates

Standardized formats – Data exports in formats compatible with Sketch, GIS, CAD, and work management systems

Quality validation – Automated checks flag incomplete records, positional errors, or missing required data before records are finalized

Establish Clear Workflows

Technology works best when people use it consistently. Document your workflows:

1. Pre-locate: How do locators access site history, previous locates, and facility records?
2. During locate: When and how is data captured? What is the minimum required information?
3. Post-locate: How is data reviewed, approved, and distributed to stakeholders?
4. Exception handling: What happens when GPS accuracy is poor, or conflicts arise between records and field findings?

Train all team members on these workflows and update them based on field feedback.

PLAN FOR THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT

Canadian locators face unique challenges that impact GPS effectiveness:

Winter conditions – Cold affects battery life and device operation. Carry backup batteries and keep devices warm

Urban density – Signal interference in city cores may require alternative positioning methods or post-processing

Rural accessibility – Remote areas may lack cellular connectivity for real-time data sync. Ensure your system works offline

Varied terrain – Forest cover, valleys, and northern latitudes can impact GPS accuracy. Understand your equipment's limitations

MEASURING SUCCESS

Track metrics that demonstrate value:

Time efficiency – Compare time spent per locate before and after GPS implementation

Callback reduction – Measure how walk-back functionality reduces duplicate locates

Record accuracy – Track discrepancies between field findings and existing records

Damage prevention – Monitor whether improved records correlate with fewer strikes

Client satisfaction – Survey facility owners and excavators on record quality and usefulness

Share these metrics with your team to demonstrate the value of thorough data capture and build buy-in for the process.

MOVING FORWARD

GPS-enabled locating represents a significant shift from traditional methods. Success requires more than just buying equipment—it demands thoughtful implementation, consistent practices, and ongoing refinement.

Start small: pilot GPS tools with your most experienced locators, establish proven workflows, then scale across your organization. Invest in training, not just on equipment operation but on why quality data capture matters and how it protects everyone involved in ground disturbance.

Most importantly, remember that GPS technology serves the locator, not the other way around. The goal isn't to generate perfect digital records—it's to help you locate more accurately, work more efficiently, and contribute to safer excavation practices across Canada.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Integrate GPS with electromagnetic locating equipment for seamless workflows
- Establish consistent capture protocols before rolling out technology widely
- Use walk-back functionality to improve efficiency on callbacks and seasonal work
- Design records for future users, not just immediate needs
- Measure success through time savings, accuracy improvements, and damage reduction
- Adapt practices for Canadian environmental challenges. ●


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Digging deeper: How Canada's damage prevention standard review could improve underground safety

By Gordon Campbell, Operations Manager, R&B Locating Inc.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Z247 Technical Committee is actively meeting to review and update the Z247 standard, systematically working through each section with the goal of completing the modernization process by fall 2026. This comprehensive review could introduce significant changes that will impact stakeholders who rely on its guidance.

BACKGROUND

The CSA Z247 standard, titled Damage prevention for the protection of underground infrastructure, has been a cornerstone document for the damage prevention sector since its initial publication. Over the last 10 years, this standard has been instrumental in shaping the landscape of underground infrastructure protection in Canada. The journey began in 2015 with the launch of the CSA Z247 standard, the first damage prevention standard in Canada. This standard was born out of a collective vision to enhance public safety, protect our environment, and ultimately, save lives.

It was a product of tireless efforts by a diverse group of stakeholders, including regulators, transmission pipelines, telecommunications, municipalities, electricity providers, excavators, One-Call services, locators, and buried infrastructure associations. Together, they designed a damage prevention standard that applies to all of them.

CURRENT PROGRESS

The technical committee has begun its comprehensive review process, meeting regularly to examine each section of the standard in detail. This methodical approach ensures that all aspects of damage prevention are thoroughly evaluated against current industry practices, technological capabilities, and regulatory requirements. The committee has set an ambitious but achievable target of fall 2026 for completion of the updated standard.

WHY THIS REVIEW MATTERS

1. Technological advancements: The past decade has seen rapid technological progress. The committee's ongoing review is assessing these advancements and incorporating them into the standard where appropriate.
2. Regulatory landscape: Changes in provincial and federal regulations necessitate updates to ensure the standard remains compliant and relevant.
3. Industry feedback: A decade of practical application has generated valuable insights from industry stakeholders. This systematic review process provides an opportunity to address gaps and areas for improvement identified over the years.

WHAT WE CAN EXPECT

As the committee progresses through their sectional review, industry experts anticipate discussions on:

- Integration of new technologies and methodologies
- Enhanced safety protocols
- Sustainability and environmental considerations
- Streamlined compliance processes
- Updated best practices based on field experience.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The CSA welcomes input from industry stakeholders. Here's how you can participate:

1. Public review: Once draft updates

are available, participate in the public review process to provide feedback.

2. **Industry consultation:** Attend any scheduled industry consultation sessions.

3. **Join the committee:** Consider applying to join the technical committee where spaces exist or join as a guest to present your ideas at one of the working groups.

STAY INFORMED

To keep abreast of developments:

- Visit the CSA Group website regularly for updates (community.csagroup.org/news)
- Subscribe to CSA's newsletter (www.csagroup.org/store/newsletter/)
- Follow CSA on social media platforms – Download a copy of the current standard (www.csagroup.org/store/product/CAN-CSA-Z247-15/)
- Reach out to any committee member for a chat

Since its inception, the CSA Z247 standard has served as a driving force, directing activities around underground infrastructure and ensuring the safety of our workers and communities. However, as we stand here today, nearly a decade later, we recognize that our world has evolved.

Gordon Campbell, chair of the committee, stated: "As we work through each section of the standard, we see tremendous potential for the CSA Z247 to evolve and meet today's challenges while anticipating tomorrow's needs. Our systematic review process ensures no stone is left unturned as we work toward our fall 2026 completion target. This is not an easy task or one to be taken lightly, but I am confident that with the collective wisdom and dedication of this committee, we will deliver a standard that serves Canada's damage prevention community for the next decade and beyond."

Stay tuned for more updates as this important process progresses toward completion in fall 2026. ●

LOCATOR STORIES *from the field*

BURNED POWERPOLE

A stark reminder of the realities we face

This image of a burned power pole, barely standing after a wildfire tore through a small Northern Alberta community, is more than just a snapshot – it's a symbol of the unpredictable and often dangerous environments locate technician's encounter. Whether it's the aftermath of natural disasters, extreme weather, or the threat of aggressive animals, our work places us on the front lines of public safety and infrastructure resilience. Each charred remnant tells a story of urgency, risk, and the critical role locators play in rebuilding and protecting our communities. — *Alberta*

FISHING

The hydrovac hole phone sacrifice

You can't tell me you've never done this: leaning over a hydrovac hole to confirm the size of a massive pipe, laser-focused on the job, only to hear that unmistakable plunk. You look down in horror as your phone, freed from an unbuttoned pocket, disappears into the muddy abyss. At that moment, you're not just a locate technician – you're an improvised angler. Do what it takes: fashion a fishing rod from flagging tape, a whip off the ATV, and sheer desperation. Because in this line of work, it's not just about finding buried infrastructure – it's about recovering your buried dignity.

FORGOT SENDER ON SITE

A long day, a forgotten sender

You know it's been a long day when your locate machine gets left behind like a forgotten lunchbox. This photo, sent in by one of our techs, captures a lonely sender sitting patiently on-site – probably wondering where everyone went. Turns out, the site foreman spotted it and gave our dispatch a call to let us know it was safe. Of course, it couldn't have been a nearby site; nope, it was a solid two-hour drive away. Good thing we're headed back tomorrow anyway! It's a classic case of "locate it, flag it… forget it". Just another reminder that while we're great at finding buried infrastructure, sometimes we lose track of our own gear. — *Alberta*

FOSSIL FINDING

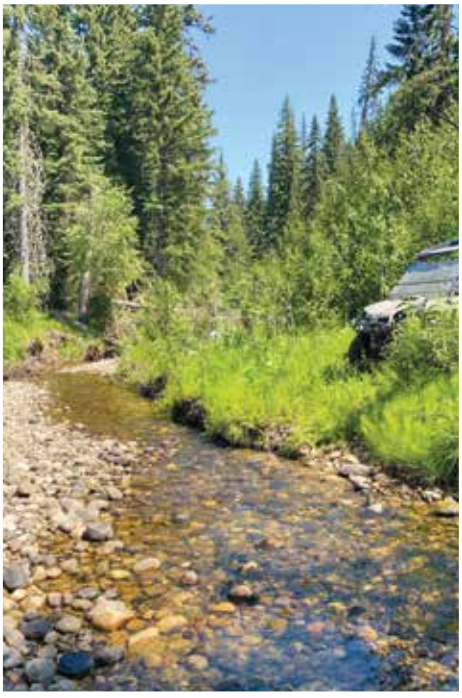
Unearthing the unexpected

While marking out a site in Northern Alberta, we stumbled across a rock embedded with numerous fossils – a rare find that reminds us that there is ancient history beneath our feet. This region is known for prehistoric discoveries, and moments like these highlight the incredible diversity of what lies underground. Unfortunately, our locate machines aren't calibrated to detect fossils or gold – just the vital infrastructure that keeps our communities running. Still, it's discoveries like this that add a sense of adventure to the job and remind us that every dig has the potential to uncover something extraordinary. — *Alberta*

WASHER MISHAP

Laundry lessons from the field

That moment when you open the washer door and realize…yep, you forgot to empty your pockets. Your ribbon's in there, tangled like a spaghetti monster, and your gloves look like they've been through a tornado. Lucky for us, this tech is just as good at untying knots as he is at tying them – though next time, maybe the ribbon deserves its own laundry bag. It's a reminder that the job doesn't end when the boots come off… sometimes, it follows you all the way to the spin cycle. — *Alberta*



CREEK CROSSING

Wildlife awareness in remote locations

Working in Northern B.C. means you're not just dodging buried cables; you're also keeping an eye out for the kind of wildlife that doesn't care about your locate job. On one recent remote site, our crew resorted to cranking up the speakers in the side by side to discourage a grizzly bear after hunters told them of sightings nearby. It wasn't exactly textbook bear deterrence. Nothing says "we're working here!" like blasting music into the forest and hoping the local wildlife isn't into classic rock. Bears aren't exactly part of the job description, but out there, safety means being ready for anything – above or below ground – especially when your backup plan is a playlist and prayer. — *B.C.*

Staying safe in the field: Preventing dog attacks in the locating industry

By Jamie Andersen, First Alert Locating Ltd.

For underground facility locate technicians, every day brings new challenges: unpredictable terrain, changing weather, a variety of job sites, and the ever-present risk of encountering wildlife. In recent years, field workers across Canada have reported a noticeable increase in dog-related incidents. According to the Humane Society of Canada, over 500,000 dog bites are reported annually – a disturbing number that highlights the growing need for awareness and prevention.

As urban and rural development continues to expand, field workers are increasingly required to enter residential properties where dogs are present – often without warning or adequate safety measures in place.

While many homeowners consider their pets part of the family, dogs are naturally territorial and protective. The sudden appearance of a stranger in their yard, especially one carrying unfamiliar equipment, can trigger defensive behaviour in any size of dog. What may begin as barking or posturing can quickly escalate into a bite or attack, putting workers at serious risk.

Beyond the physical harm, dog attacks can lead to emotional trauma, lost work time, and even legal complications. For employers, these incidents can result in liability issues, increased insurance costs, and reputational damage. That's why it's more important than ever for locate technicians to be equipped not only with the technical skills of the job but also with the knowledge, tools, and protocols to prevent and handle canine encounters safely.

This article aims to raise awareness and provide practical, field-tested strategies to help locators take proactive measures to stay safe while carrying out their essential work—and reduce the risk of injury.

HERE ARE SOME ESSENTIAL TIPS:

1. Know the Signs of Aggression

Understanding dog body language is key:

- Relaxed posture: Tail wagging loosely, ears up – likely friendly.
- Warning signs: Growling, barking, stiff body, raised hackles – proceed with caution.
- Fearful behaviour: Cowering, tail tucked, avoiding eye contact – may bite if cornered.

2. Be Proactive Before Arriving

- Call ahead to ask homeowners to secure pets indoors.
- Look for clues like dog toys, bowls, or signage indicating a dog is present.
- Never assume a fence or leash will hold a dog – always stay alert.

3. Use Protective Tools

- Carry dog deterrent or a pop-up umbrella to create a barrier.
- A dog stick or baton can redirect a bite away from your body.
- Wear high boots and thick clothing for added protection.

4. Stay Calm and Aware

- Announce your presence by knocking or making noise before entering.
- Avoid sudden movements and never run – this can trigger a chase.
- If approached, stand still, avoid eye contact, and speak calmly.

5. Know What to Do If Attacked

- Use tools or objects to shield yourself.
- If bitten, wash the wound immediately and seek medical attention.
- Report the incident to your supervisor and local animal control.

6. Advocate for Training and Policy

- Encourage your company to provide dog safety training.
- Maintain a dog hazard log for known properties.
- Include canine risk assessments in your Job Safety Analysis (JSA).

Dog Safety Checklist for Field Workers

- Call ahead to confirm pets are secured
- Look for signs of dogs on the property
- Carry deterrent spray or protective tools
- Wear protective clothing and boots
- Make noise before entering a yard
- Stay calm and avoid sudden movements
- Do not run – back away slowly if approached
- Use a firm voice to command the dog
- Report any incidents immediately
- Participate in dog safety training regularly

By staying alert, prepared, and informed, locate technicians can significantly reduce the risk of dog-related incidents – ensuring every job site is not only productive, but safe. ●

Reclaiming value in a commodified industry

By Gordon Campbell, Operations Manager, R&B Locating Inc.

"Locating as an industry has been largely commodified. Our product offering is pretty much the same from company to company. Our contracts are based on impersonal performance metrics for safety, accuracy, and on-time performance – meet the standard or lose the work."

This stark assessment, shared by a veteran industry professional, captures a reality many of us recognize but rarely discuss openly. Somewhere along the path from specialized craft to regulated service, the locating industry has found itself trapped in a commodity mindset where differentiation seems impossible and value is measured only by checkbox compliance.

But is this really inevitable? Or can we change how clients see our value?

THE COMMODITY TRAP

The commodification of locating services didn't happen overnight. It evolved through decades of necessary standardization, regulatory development, and the industry's own success in establishing baseline safety and accuracy protocols. What began as essential quality controls gradually became the ceiling of expectation rather than the floor.

Today's typical RFP reads like a technical specification sheet: 99.7 per cent accuracy, sub-surface tolerance measured in inches, response time within days or even hours, certified technicians only. These parameters create a procurement environment where the lowest compliant bid wins, and where exceeding standards often goes unrecognized and unrewarded.

This race to the bottom has real consequences. Companies find themselves competing primarily on price while absorbing the costs of safety, training, and technology that clients take for granted. Meanwhile, the wealth of knowledge, experience, and specialized capabilities that locating professionals possess gets reduced to simple pass/fail metrics.

BUILDING CLIENT PARTNERSHIPS

The most successful transformation from commodity supplier to valued partner requires changing the fundamental client relationship. This means shifting from reactive service provision to proactive consultation.

Smart companies are investing in client education, helping procurement teams understand the hidden costs of choosing purely on price. They're documenting and communicating the additional value they provide, creating case studies that demonstrate ROI beyond basic compliance metrics.

This relationship building takes time and requires companies to be selective about clients who value partnership over pure price competition. The result is often higher margins, more stable work relationships, and opportunities for expanded service offerings.

This commodification isn't universal across all market segments. In Alberta and other regions, private sector and oil & gas clients often prioritize safety and quality over speed, creating opportunities for companies to differentiate through specialized services like GPR, drone applications, and ground disturbance witnessing. However, this makes the contrast even starker with large utility owners who continue to treat locating as a pure commodity purchase.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Having spent over 30 years in utilities and locating, and earned recognition including the prestigious Jim Douglas Award for Excellence in Damage Prevention, I've seen how the locating industry has evolved. We have a choice to make. We can continue down the path of commodification, competing primarily on price while margins erode and service quality becomes increasingly standardized. Or we can collectively work to elevate the profession by emphasizing the expertise, problem-solving capability, and specialized knowledge that experienced professionals bring to every project.

My work chairing the CCGA and ORCGA Best Practice Committees has shown me that this transformation won't happen through individual company efforts alone. It requires industry leadership, client education, and strategic positioning that emphasizes long-term value over short-term cost savings. Through my industry involvement, I've seen companies successfully make this transition by consistently demonstrating their expertise and maintaining professional standards even in challenging procurement environments.

The fundamental question isn't whether locating services can be differentiated, it's whether we have the courage and patience to insist on recognition for the full value we provide. Our industry's expertise extends far beyond meeting minimum compliance standards. Having managed operations that protected tens of thousands of kilometres of critical infrastructure and handled hundreds of thousands of locate requests, I know firsthand what we're capable of delivering.

The infrastructure projects of tomorrow will benefit greatly if we choose to reclaim our position as essential technical professionals whose expertise deserves appropriate recognition and compensation. The choice is ours: remain trapped in the commodity mindset or elevate the profession to where it rightfully belongs. ●

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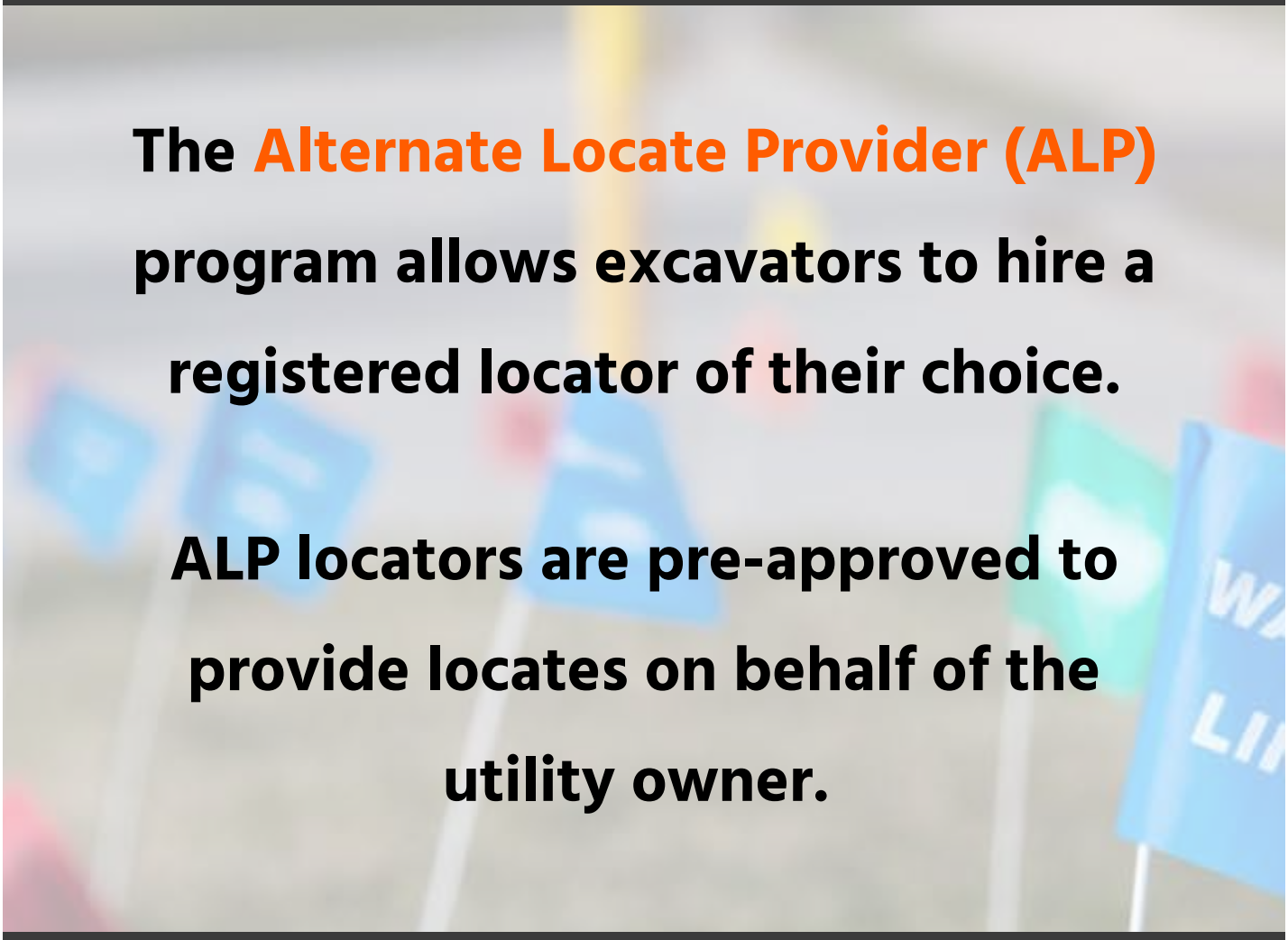

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FEBRUARY 10-12, 2026
ORCGA Damage Prevention Symposium
Niagara Falls, ON
www.orcga.com/2026-damage-prevention-symposium

FEBRUARY 26-28, 2026
WCOWMA-BC 2026 Convention & Trade Show
Nanaimo, BC
(Western Canada Onsite Wastewater Management Association)
www.wcowma.com/event/wcowma-bc-2026-convention-trade-show

MARCH 10-12, 2026
2026 SARM Annual Convention and Trade Show
Regina, SK
www.sarm.ca/events/annual-convention-and-trade-show

MARCH 16-18, 2026
Rural Municipalities of Alberta RMA Spring 2026 Convention
Edmonton, AB
www.rmalberta.com/rma-conventions

MARCH 18-20, 2026
2026 Info-Excavation Annual Convention
Saint-Hyacinthe, QC
https://congres.info-ex.com/

APRIL 2026 (Date to be Determined)
CANS 2026 Annual De-Icer
Halifax, NS
(Construction Association of Nova Scotia)
www.cans.ns.ca/events/cans-de-icer

APRIL 2026
National Dig Safe Month
National Virtual

APRIL 14, 2026
EAPUOC Safety Seminar & Trade Show
Sherwood Park, AB
www.eapuoc.com/2026-trade-show

APRIL 20-26, 2026
Locator Safety & Appreciation Week
National Virtual

APRIL 20-21, 2026
Western Conference on Safety 2026
Vancouver, BC
Workplace Occupational Health & Safety Conference
www.wcs.pacificsafetycenter.com

APRIL 27-30, 2026
CGA Conference & Expo 2026
Colorado Springs, CO
www.cgaconference.com

APRIL 27-30, 2026
Energy Safety Conference 2026
Banff, AB
www.energysafetycanada.com/News-Events/Conference

APRIL 28, 2026
National Day of Mourning
National Virtual

MAY 4-9, 2026
CCOHS Safety & Health Week
National Virtual
www.ccohs.ca/events/safety-and-health-week/

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Grande Prairie, AB
www.grandeprairiechamber.com/pres

MAY 17-23, 2026
National Public Works Week
National Virtual
www.apwa.org/events/national-public-works-week-npww/

MAY 20, 2026
CAPULC 2026 Annual General Meeting
Edmonton, AB & Virtual
www.capulc.ca

JUNE 3-4, 2026
Saskatchewan Oil & Gas Show
Weyburn, SK
www.oilshow.ca

JUNE 9-11, 2026
Global Energy Show Canada 2026 Exhibition & Conference
Calgary, AB
www.globalenergyshow.com

AUGUST 18-20, 2026
Global Damage Prevention Summit
Nashville, TN
www.actsnowinc.com/globaldps

SEPTEMBER 16-17, 2026
Oil Sands Expo
Fort McMurray, AB
www.oilsandsexpo.com

SEPTEMBER 21-25, 2026
International Pipeline Conference & Expo
Calgary, AB
www.ipceyyc.com/conference

OCTOBER 5-7, 2026
Joint Annual Conference & Trade Show #JAC2026
Penticton, BC
(BC Municipal Safety Association & Public Works Association of BC)
www.bcmsa.ca/what-we-do/conferences

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