



October 2016

2016 Day of the Dozers Recap

By: Lareina Taing

On September 24th, 2016, over 2,400 people had the opportunity to observe and operate heavy construction equipment at the “Day of the Dozers” held at ERX Motor Park in Elk River, Minnesota. The annual event is a unique family-friendly day out that was created to raise money for Children’s Hospital and Clinics of Minnesota. As the main attraction, children got to sit in the cabs of giant bulldozers, excavators, dump trucks, and skid steers and run the equipment with a licensed operator. A variety of games, safety demos, prize giveaways, equipment simulators, and food added to the event. This year’s Day of the Dozers was the largest one yet, with even more equipment, gate entries, vendors, and activities than ever before! Gopher State One Call (GSOC), a Minnesota Common Ground Alliance (MNCGA) participant, was proud to be a key sponsor for this year’s event.



Photo Credit: Minnesota Utility Contractor’s Association (MUCA)

Background on Day of the Dozers

David Harn, a Caterpillar manager, and his wife Evelyn founded the event. The Harns son had kidney problems as a child, so they believed that it was important to generate funds to support the Children’s Hospital. The couple felt fortunate that they were able to leave the hospital with a healthy child and wanted to help other parents experience that same joy. The Harns planned the event in six weeks and partnered up with ERX Motor Park, volunteers, and several sponsors to make the event happen. When the couple moved out-of-state after the first Day of the Dozers, they turned to the Minnesota Utility Contractor’s Association (MUCA) to take on the responsibility of planning and hosting future events. The first event raised over \$5,000 for Children’s Hospital and Clinics of Minnesota from and this amount has grown considerably each year.

The Minnesota Regional Common Ground Alliance (MN CGA) hosted its own “Call Before You Dig” area to help children and their parents learn about underground utility safety. MN CGA members Xcel Energy, Connexus Energy, CenterPoint Energy, Rhino Marking & Protection Systems, the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS), and USIC joined GSOC in participating. Children had the opportunity to learn about dig safety through different types of games and activities and win prizes such as 811 super hero capes, drawstring backpacks, cups, water bottles, and more. In order to win prizes, the kids completed a checklist of various safe-digging activities. Activities available at the event included an electricity awareness game provided by Connexus Energy, a color-coding flag game provided by Rhino Marking, a locator hand-digging game staffed by the MNOPS, Xcel Energy, and CenterPoint Energy, and a locating paint can bowling alley provided by USIC.



Photo Credit: Minnesota Utility Contractor's Association (MUCA)

Alicia Berger, Manager of Damage Prevention for Xcel Energy and co-chair of the MN CGA, talked with us about the event. She commented that the MN CGA has sponsored the Day of the Dozers for three years and out of all of the events that her organization is involved in, this event is her “favorite”. When asked about why she believes it’s important to educate the younger generation about safe digging practices, Alicia responded, “It all starts with the kids. When you educate the kids, you educate the parents too! Kids are smart!”

The fourth annual Day of the Dozers was a huge success. Over \$36,000 was raised for Children’s Hospital and Clinics of Minnesota. All proceeds from this year’s event will be donated to the Ronald McDonald House program at Children’s, giving families a comfortable place to rest, regroup and, most importantly, remain together when a child is facing a serious illness. GSOC is pleased to have contributed to this event and hopes for its continued success in the future!



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