



Staking University at GSOC Recap - May 2017

July 2017

By: Lareina Taing



UTILITY LOCATOR TRAINING

On May 22-23, 2017, Gopher State One Call (GSOC) hosted a two-day Locator Certification Seminar (LCS) taught by Staking University (Staking U) instructor John Foster. John estimated that the LCS included 75% of hands-on training, with 25% of classroom education. Students went outside to locate a variety of different underground electric, telecommunications, water, and gas lines around the office building.

Since 2013, John has been an instructor for Staking U at their Hemet, CA campus. He has 30+ years of experience in pipeline construction and underground pipe and cable locating, including work in the U.S. and abroad. Working with the Eastern Municipal Water District in Southern CA from 1980-2013, he held positions in construction, locating, management, and training. He also served as committee member on the California Regional Common Ground Alliance and has been a member of Underground Service Alert for Southern California's Board of Directors since 2013. An experienced professional in the field, he believes that "it's important for locators to receive this training to understand field work and the theory of electromagnetic locating. Many locators only receive limited training from their company or from the sale representatives. When you learn that different frequencies will do different things, where to apply the knowledge you receive, and how to be certain of accurate markings, this can truly boost the confidence of the locator."

When asked to elaborate on important aspects of the locator's job, John noted "challenges are becoming greater everyday with the amount of new underground utilities being installed. The fact that old and abandoned lines are typically not removed makes it tougher to distinguish between utilities when locating. One big challenge for us is something we can all change. Usually when facilities are being installed, they are not placed with something to locate them, such as locating wire. Untraceable facilities such as plastic pipes and fiber lines cannot be found through electromagnetic locating unless other tracking devices are installed. Locators can overcome these obstacles by working with the design engineers to make sure that newly installed facilities are locatable. This will ensure the protection of these facilities and the safety of those working in the field."



On September 21-22, 2017, GSOC will host another LCS at its office in Mendota Heights. The LCS will include classroom and outdoor presentations intended to teach Minnesota locators:

- Superior troubleshooting techniques;
- Skills to help them consistently provide accurate and complete utility locations;
- A mastery of locating equipment; and,
- The competencies required to pass Staking U's locator certification test.

[Click here for a complete LCS class syllabus.](#)

Event Details

Location

GSOC
1110 Centre Point Curve
Mendota Heights, MN 55120

Time

Registration begins at 8:00am
Class runs from 8:30am-4pm

Cost

\$645 per person

Registration:

1. [Click here to register online.](#)
2. By phone- (815) 468-7814
3. By fax- (815) 468-7644. Complete the [registration form](#) and fax.
4. By mail. Complete the registration form and mail to:
PLANET UNDERGROUND INTERACTIVE
411 South Evergreen St.
Manteno, IL 60950

Damage prevention is a shared responsibility. We all must do our part to keep everyone safe and underground lines in service. If you're a locator, it's important to educate yourself on locating best practices and to master your equipment before going out in the field. As an excavator, it's important to always contact GSOC 48 hours in advance, excluding weekends and holidays, to have a locator come out to mark your utility lines before you dig! We agree with John Foster when he says that "one damage can ruin a contractor or company, but one mark can save a life."

[To learn more about Staking U, click here.](#)



Customer Support
(651)681-7326

To File a Locate Request:



Twin Cities Metro 651-454-0002
Greater MN Area 800-252-1166
Emergency 866-640-3637
Or you can go online at www.gopherstateonecall.org



www.facebook.com/gopherstateonecall



www.twitter.com/gopheronecall

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