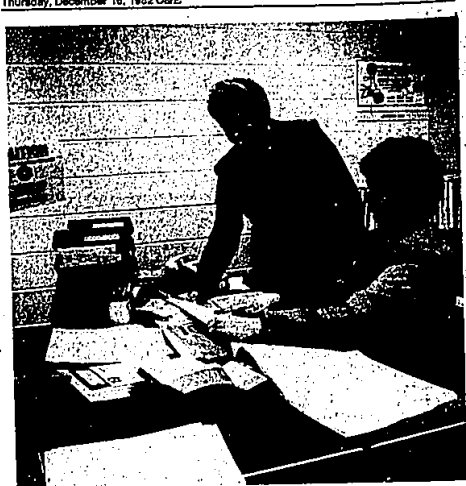




At a work location where sewers are to be laid, David Dunigan and utility service men start down the road to begin determining where stakes will be placed marking utility services. From left: Michael French, installer-repairman for Hickory Telephone Co.; Edward G. Jordan, service technician, Michigan Bell; Dunigan and Daniel D. Crandall, gas linesman, Consumers Power Co.



David Dunigan places the two millionth call to "Miss Dig," the utility information service, from the Dunigan Brothers construction trailer in Gull Lake near Kalamazoo. About 57 miles of sewer construction will be completed, and close cooperation with utility companies and governmental units is necessary to prevent damage to underground and overhead utility facilities.



Sally Heaton, facilities record clerk for Michigan Bell in Kalamazoo and her supervisor, Marilyn Kennedy (standing), engineering associate, have received a teletype from "Miss Dig" headquarters in Royal Oak. Here they examine records to see if any underground telephone cables are located where Dunigan Brothers will excavate.

'Miss Dig' fields 2 millionth call

"Miss Dig" has saved hundreds of lives and millions of dollars in property damage since she began operating in Michigan 12 years ago.

"Interruption of utility service has been avoided in countless instances," said Michael Digon, executive secretary of the program.

"Prior to the 'Miss Dig' program, public and private utilities experienced frequent service interruptions caused by excavators striking pipes and cables," he added.

This week the "Miss Dig" program passed a milestone by fielding its two-millionth call. Here is how the program works:

ANY CONTRACTOR or private property owner who is planning to excavate, dials "Miss Dig" at least 48 hours before beginning an excavation job. The contractor gives the operator pertinent information about the planned job, including exact location of the job.

The information is entered into a computer and relayed to all utilities serving the location.

Those utilities then stake out their lines with color-coded markers, sometimes meeting with the contractor on large jobs to discuss excavation plans. Assistance may also be provided by an electric utility if equipment is to be used near electric overhead lines.

Five Michigan utility companies — Michigan Bell Telephone, Detroit Edison, Michigan Consolidated Gas, General Telephone and Consumers Power — started "Miss Dig" in November 1970. They have administrative responsibility of operating the system.

Earlier this year Consumers Power established a subsidiary to take over operations.

800-482-7171 was added to accommodate the entire state.

At first, only underground telephone, telegraph, gas, electric, water sewer and storm lines and drains were of concern, Digon said. From 1977-79, "MISS DIG" added coverage of overhead electric lines throughout the state. Recently, "MISS DIG" began taking responsibility for underground television cables.

"MISS DIG" began with a pilot program in four townships bordering Detroit and spread rapidly throughout the state.

There are now 450 participants in the "MISS DIG" program. An average of 1,000 calls are received each day at the call center in Royal Oak. Fourteen operators have 19 phone lines open.

The original telephone number spelled MISS DIG, but the toll free number 1-

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