

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12/10/15****Leaders of Think Tank Publish Article on Excavation Safety Technologies**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Chairman and CEO of the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure, Brigham McCown and Executive Director, Shane Skelton co-authored an article published in the International Confederation of Energy Regulators (ICER) Chronicle this month highlighting the need for innovative communication technologies to ensure excavation is safer for all stakeholders.

The article is titled, “The Role of Improved Communication and Technology in Enhancing Damage Prevention Practices: Why use 20<sup>th</sup> Century Technology to combat 21<sup>st</sup> Century Safety Challenges,” and encourages the use of available communication technologies to foster increased safety for all those involved in the excavation process.

With more than 300,000 miles of gas transmission lines and two million miles of gas distribution lines tunneling throughout the United States, damage to this crucial infrastructure can lead to utility disruptions, harmful gas leaks, environmental issues, injuries, and in the worst cases, death.

Nearly a decade ago, the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) created the “Nine Elements of Effective Damage Prevention Program,” to encourage efficient and safe communication practices to prevent damage from excavation. As a result, Congress granted PHMSA the authority to penalize, fine, and withhold federal funds from states with programs proving to be insufficient in communicating and preventing incidents of excavation damage. While this PHMSA program promotes safe excavation practices, the article concludes that the organization has yet to take action articulating next steps for states to meet each of the “Nine Elements of Effective Damage Prevention Program.”

To read the article, visit the ICER website to view the most recent publication featuring the article.

**The Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure (Aii)** is a U.S.-based nonprofit committed to recognizing the nation’s need for improved infrastructure and highlighting innovative and effective strategies to address these issues related to energy, transportation, and technology advancements.

**Contact:****Emily Hanhart****Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure****(202) 808-0591****ehanhart@aiiwire.org**