

## All by Yourself

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

This seems to be an issue that we are seeing more and more every day. Budgets get tighter and older operators retiring with no one to take their place. It can be challenging and dangerous to keep up with the daily chores and emergencies that can arise.

I ran into a situation that inspired me to write this article several weeks ago in a small Nebraska town.

I receive a call from a Village I work with quite a bit that needed assistance with locating several main valves under gravel streets. I responded promptly and was able to find the valves in a relatively short amount of time. So I asked "Mr. Town Man" what is going on that these valves needed to be found and dug up? He stated that there was a water leak a few blocks over so I asked who is helping to dig, and he replied "No One, it's just me". I looked at my watch and it wasn't even noon yet. It was a 55-degree day in December and I replied "Lets go. I will help you". With a puzzled look on his face, he was much obliged and took me up on my offer.

Well, he operated the backhoe, I grabbed the shovel and probe like the olden days and we went to work. Turns out it was a leaking corporation stop. He did also manage to self-excavate the neighbors service line as well. So now we have two lines to repair and not enough parts to make the repairs. Fortunately, he was able to band aid it together and the proper parts were there the next morning.

One main point here is never try to excavate and repair a waterline by yourself. There are way too many things that can go wrong. Trench collapse, stuck in the muck, contact with other utilities due to not having a spotter -- the list can go on and on. You always have to think SAFTEY FIRST.

If you are a one-man band and you need assistance or a second set of hands, guidance, instructions, etc., whether it's an emergency or not, please give me a call to help. If I can't make it, chances are good I can find someone to assist you. We certainly do not want to see anyone get injured trying to complete a job by themselves, that a phone call could have prevented.