

Austin Broden's account of events:

In December of 2020 we decided to do some drain tiling since the weather was still holding and we were able to perform some ground work on our crop acres. We called 811 and got things located in the area where we planned to do some drainage tile. We did the spots that were planned and everything went well. The weather was going to be nice for one extra day than we planned so we thought we had the time to do one more spot. We felt pushed and rushed due to the weather so we were in a bit of a hurry and this was not a planned tile spot in the beginning so we were more focused on doing this very small spot which was the size of approximately 1 acre and didn't think there was any utilities in the area or give it any thought that there would be. We were more focused on the weather allowing us to get the job done. So when we tiled that spot we didn't realize we had any problems. Everything went well, we thought. But the airplane that flies over the pipeline weekly, I found out, saw our equipment in the area of the pipeline. And that's when the airplane pilot called CHS and they contacted me and we immediately went and located the pipeline. And yes, my tile went right over the top of the pipe and it scraped the paint off the top of the pipe.

That particular piece of ground I had only farmed for 1 year so I was not overly familiar with this area. And I did talk to the land owner before I did the tiling, so I got permission to do the work.

This has been a very eye opening experience and I have definitely learned a lot from this incident. I realize it could have been a catastrophic accident. And I definitely realize we could have had major problems with contamination. So it's been a very important learning experience for me and my hired help.