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## News

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### **DOT Issues Grants to States for Pipeline Safety Call Centers** *Centers Support the National 811 'Call Before You Dig' Hotline*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration issued just over \$1 million in One Call grants today to support states’ safe digging call centers in an effort to reduce pipeline digging accidents.

The One Call grants come on the heels of a new [public service announcement urging the public to “Call 811 Before You Dig,”](#) a toll-free number that is routed to the states’ One Call centers to provide important safety information before digging. PHMSA is highlighting Call 811 Before You Dig on its [website](#) along with other educational resources Americans can use to promote hazmat and pipeline safety in their communities, in recognition of National Transportation Week 2012.

“Pipeline safety is a top priority at DOT, and one of the easiest ways to stay safe is to call 811 before you dig,” said Secretary Ray LaHood. “With these grants, we can help more homeowners stay safe and help communities save millions by avoiding costly pipeline accidents.”

One-third of serious pipeline accidents are caused by someone digging and hitting a pipeline by mistake because they did not call 811. And according to a recent [notice of proposed rulemaking](#), between 1988 and 2010, excavation damage was responsible for \$438,785,552 in property damage. By calling 811, the public will be connected to the appropriate state One Call center, and local utility companies will visit the property to mark the location of any underground lines, pipes and cables before digging begins.

The \$1,061,523 in awards announced today are part of PHMSA’s yearly safety grant program. The number of gas distribution leaks caused by excavation damage has declined considerably thanks to an aggressive public awareness campaign and the introduction of the 811 number for One Call centers, which was established in 2007.

“Most pipeline accidents are preventable with just one call to these centers,” said PHMSA administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “We will continue to support this important public safety resource and encourage the public to call 811 before they dig.”

PHMSA One Call grants support state damage prevention programs by financing upgrades to communications systems and providing funds for training personnel, developing and using underground pipeline location technology, and improving record retention and recording capabilities for one-call notification systems. The grants will also be used to provide public information and education.

The award recipients are:

- Alabama - \$10,000
- Connecticut - \$45,000
- Delaware - \$16,430
- Georgia - \$45,000
- Illinois - \$45,000
- Indiana - \$45,000
- Iowa - \$22,000
- Kansas - \$45,000
- Louisiana - \$45,000
- Maine - \$45,000
- Michigan - \$29,900
- Minnesota - \$ 45,000
- Mississippi - \$44,928
- Missouri - \$10,000
- Nebraska - \$30,000
- Nevada - \$45,000
- New Hampshire - \$45,000
- New Mexico - \$45,000
- New York - \$41,500
- North Carolina - \$45,000
- North Dakota - \$10,000
- Oregon - \$41,000
- Puerto Rico - \$10,000

- Rhode Island - \$45,000
- South Carolina - \$10,000
- South Dakota - \$45,000
- Texas - \$45,000
- Vermont - \$45,000
- Virginia - \$ 20,000
- Washington, DC - \$35,000
- Wyoming - \$9,920

Today's announcement is just one way the Department of Transportation is celebrating National Transportation Week (May 14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>). Over the next seven days, the Department is highlighting its commitment to ensuring the safety of America's transportation systems this week and all 52 weeks of the year. Investment in our nation's infrastructure is critical for maintaining and improving safety. Through Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, discretionary funds and other programs, DOT is working to enhance, expand and modernize American infrastructure, but Congress needs to act. A bipartisan long-term transportation bill is necessary to move our country into the future.

### **Pipeline Safety Initiatives**

The effort to educate the public about 811 and safe digging is part of PHMSA's push to improve pipeline safety, including increased [enforcement actions](#), proposed data collection initiatives, and aggressive public education efforts. PHMSA also has several [pipeline safety proposals](#) out for comment, including one that addresses [excavation damage prevention](#).

*The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.5 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.*

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