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U.S. Department of Transportation Kicks Off National Safe Digging Month 2011

WASHINGTON – To raise awareness that excavators on a site and do-it-yourselfers in their own yards must call 811 before any digging project begins, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) today announced that the month of April is designated as National Safe Digging Month.

“Call before You Dig is more than a slogan; it’s a call to action. If you are starting a digging project, protect yourself, your family, and your community from the potential damage and injuries that can result from hitting a pipeline,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “Calling 811 is simple to do and it can save lives.”

Toll-free state 811 call centers work with pipeline operators and utility companies to mark pipelines before excavators and do-it-yourselfers begin digging projects.

“Failure to call before digging can result in property damage, tragic accidents and even fatalities. While these types of incidents have declined over the last ten years, one out of every three pipeline accidents involve people who did not call 811 first,” said PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “I encourage everyone to remember to call 811 before you dig.”

PHMSA has a number of initiatives underway to support National Safe Digging Month and damage prevention, including:

- Partnerships with national organizations, such as the Common Ground Alliance, as well as safety groups, public advocacy groups and trade organizations;
- State Damage Prevention Grants to states and One-Call Centers to foster the adoption of the elements of an effective damage prevention program;
- An initiative to pursue enforcement action against third parties that damage pipelines in situations where the state lacks effective enforcement programs.

For more information visit <http://www.call811.com/>

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