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Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Dig Safely Month 2009 Proclaimed Safe Digging recognized by Governor

Atlanta, GA March 30, 2009 – April 1 may be April Fool's day, but it is no reason to make foolish assumptions about the location of underground utilities. April 1, 2009 marks the first day of Georgia's Dig Safely Month as declared by Governor Sonny Perdue. The Utilities Protection Center, Inc (UPC), along with Governor Perdue encourages you to "Call Before You Dig."

"Calling Before you dig is an important step in safe digging. It not only saves lives, but money and time. If you have dug in the past without calling, don't make that mistake again. Call 811 on every project, every time. The call is free and having the underground utilities marked is free," Shares UPC's Executive Director Claudette Campbell.

Danny McGriff, Director, Facilities Protection Unit, with the Georgia Public Service Commission reminds, "homeowners, landscapers, fence installers, farmers, plumbers, professional excavators – anyone who will be digging- is required to dial 811 before beginning the project. Utility services like phone, gas, power, water and cable that your family depends on are buried underground. Every digging project requires a call to 811 - even small projects like planting trees or shrubs. Striking a single line can result in harm to yourself or someone else, costly fines and repair fees or inconvenient outages. One utility line is unintentionally struck every minute in the US. 811 is easy to remember and the call and the service are free. It also keeps you in compliance with the Georgia 'Dig Law'."

"The Public Service Commission reminds all Georgians that Call Before you Dig is the law. Failure to obey the law can have serious consequences. I am pleased that the Governor has joined us in proclaiming April as Dig Safely

Month to remind everyone of the importance of Call Before You Dig," states Georgia Public Service Commission Chairman Doug Everett.

A free call to 811 starts the process of getting underground utility lines marked. The UPC notifies member utility companies where and when you plan to dig. On average, one call to the UPC will notify seven utility companies where digging will take place. These companies send out locate technicians to mark the underground lines with colored paint and/or flags. By respecting the location of the paint marks and flags you can avoid dangerous contact with underground facilities.

Notify the Utilities Protection Center at least two (2) business days before excavation begins on public and private property, rights of way and easements. Know what's below. Call before you dig, simply dial 811.

Established in 1974, the UPC is a non-profit organization comprised of over 700-member utility companies, including cities and counties throughout Georgia that benefit through reductions in lost time, accidents, service interruptions and costly repairs. It is estimated that the UPC notification system has saved its member utilities and the public at-large from hundreds of millions of dollars in expensive repairs during its years of public service to the citizens of Georgia. The program is credited with helping to prevent countless potentially life threatening situations and the dangers and inconveniences associated with service interruptions.

The UPC strives to encourage four Dig Safely practices: 1) Call before you dig. 2) Wait the required amount of time for marking. 3) Respect the marks. 4) Dig with care.

The UPC, keeping Georgians safe and connected, Call Before You Dig, every project, every time, dial 811 or (1-800-282-7411) for immediate notification from any part of the state. Callers in the Atlanta area may call 770-623-4344. For more information, visit the UPC web site at www.gaupc.com. For more about the Georgia "Dig Law" visit the Georgia Public Service Commission's website at www.psc.state.ga.us.

Cutline:

PHOTO CUTLINE: Statewide stakeholders gather at the capital in Atlanta for the Proclamation of Dig Safely Month 2009.

Pictured in this photo:

Back Row – L-R

Bill Edge, GA Public Service Commission
Wendell Holbrook, Cobb Energy, UPC Board Member and Chair of Georgia Utilities Coordinating Council
Scott Brumbelow, Georgia Utility Contractors Association
Frankie Rigdon, Ellijay Telephone, UPC Board Member
Rick Lonn, Atlanta Gas Light, UPC Board Member
Tiffany Calloway-Ferrell, Atlanta Gas Light, UPC Board Member
Rodney Middlebrooks, City of Monroe, UPC Board Member

Middle Row L-R

Gwin Hall, Georgia Municipal Association
Tom Bond, GA Public Service Commission
Michael Bell, Southern Natural Gas
Gary Mason, GA Public Service Commission
Thomas Jenkins, Southern Natural Gas
Megan Estes, UPC
Terry McLaurin, UPC
Bruce Coogler, GA Public Service Commission
Bill West, STS/Utiliquest
Allen Bell, Georgia Power, UPC Board Member

Front L-R

Meghan Chestnutt, UPC
Jeff Patton, AT&T, Chairman of the Board for UPC
Vikki McReynolds, Georgia Utility Contractors Association
Doug Everett, Chairman, Georgia Public Service Commissioner
Governor Sonny Perdue
Claudette Campbell, UPC
Danny McGriff, GA Public Service Commission
Mitch Seabaugh, GA State Senator District 28