



For Immediate Release

May Proclaimed “Dig Safely Month” by Governor’s Office

Duluth, GA May 1, 2008 – Governor Sonny Perdue demonstrates his continued support for safe digging practices by signing a proclamation declaring May as “Dig Safely” month for Georgia. This follows a national “Safe Digging” month declaration by the Common Ground Alliance. For Georgia, and the nation, this is a timely recognition of safe digging and damage prevention for buried utilities as it is the one-year anniversary of the launch of a three-digit call before you dig number serving the nation as a whole. 811, mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), rolled out on May 1, 2007 as the National Call Before You Dig number. When dialing 811 anywhere in the nation, you are connected to your local one call center to have buried utilities located.

While Georgia Law requires that anyone performing mechanized activities in the state call before they dig, the service is available to anyone simply digging with hand tools, and the service is free. With the three digit access to the service, it is also simple to use. Calling before you dig can not only prevent damage to buried utilities as well as disruption to utility service, it can also prevent personal injury. One utility line is unintentionally struck every minute in the US.

Claudette Campbell of the Utility Protection Center (UPC) explains that, “Calling the UPC to have underground facilities located not only saves time and money, but most importantly it saves lives. It is never too late to do the right thing. If you haven’t called in the past, start today. 811 is easy to remember and the call and the service are done at no charge to the caller. It also keeps the caller/excavator in compliance with the Georgia ‘Dig Law’.”

The Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) is charged with enforcing the call before you dig law in Georgia. Director of the Facilities Protection Unit of the PSC, Danny McGriff, states “call before you dig, it is the law. With the PSC and UPC’s damage prevention partnership, great strides have been made in education of the importance of calling before you dig.”

Established in 1974, the UPC is a non-profit organization comprised of over 700-member utility companies, including city and county facility systems, 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.

Notify the Utilities Protection Center at least two (2) business days before excavation begins. Know What’s Below. Call Before You Dig, simply dial 811.

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 of Georgia web site at www.gaupc.com. For more about the Georgia "Dig Law" visit the PSC website at www.psc.state.ga.us .

Remember, "Know What's Below, Call Before You Dig."

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Resources:

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