



To: Newsroom  
Fr: Meghan Chestnutt, Utilities Protection Center, Inc.  
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Re: Dig Safely Month  
June 6, 2008

**--- For Immediate Release ---**

## **Georgia's Dig Safely Month Ends,**

### **But Damage Prevention Efforts Continue**

As Georgia's Dig Safely month comes to end, stakeholders met at the capitol in support of what should be a daily activity.

"Everyone has a part in keeping Georgia safe and connected," stated Claudette Campbell, Utilities Protection Center's (UPC) Executive Director. "Safe digging is a shared responsibility."

In attendance at the signing was Federal Administrator Carl Johnson from PHMSA. "It was my honor to attend Governor Perdue's proclamation at the State Capitol. Part of the responsibility of the US Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is to assist states in building safe and effective damage prevention programs. Safety is the Department's number one priority and the protection of the country's underground facilities are important not only to our safety but to our way of life. Georgia certainly should be proud of the efforts made by all involved stakeholders in developing one of the most comprehensive damage prevention programs in the country."

Doug Everett, Georgia Public Service Commissioner said, "Working collectively toward a common goal to prevent damages and personal injuries from occurring is a continuous program that requires team work. Since the passage of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act in 2000, the state has built a damage prevention program second to none in the nation."

Johnson presented the Georgia Public Service Commission with a grant award at the proclamation signing, "In recognition of their efforts, it was my honor to provide a check for \$100,000 to the Georgia Public Service Commission to support their damage prevention enforcement activities. While the amount of money is not large, it also comes with our promise to assist the State of Georgia in any other way we can to continue to make improvements that will benefit all stakeholder groups. The State of Georgia is one of the first recipients of our State Damage Prevention Program grants and we look forward to our continued partnership to reduce damage to all underground facilities in our communities."

Homeowners, farmers and professional excavators are encouraged to dial 811 before beginning any project involving digging. 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 an additional number to call for anyone wanting to contact the UPC. Those who have called 800-282-7411 may continue to do so," states Campbell. "Over 1.3 million locate requests, or calls, were processed by the UPC in 2007. That averages just over 112,000 requests per month for the state of Georgia." A locate request is what is created when someone calls before digging.

Campbell 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 free. It also keeps you in compliance with the Georgia 'Dig Law'."

A free call to 811 starts the process of getting underground utility lines marked. The UPC notifies member utility companies where you plan to dig. On average, one call 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 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.

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](http://www.gaupc.com). For more about the Georgia "Dig Law" visit the Georgia Public Service Commission's website at [www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us).

### **Those Pictured included:**

Governor Sonny Perdue

#### UPC Board Members

1. Frankie Rigdon, Plant Operations Manager ETC Communications
2. Rick Lonn, Director of Regulatory Compliance, Atlanta Gas Light
3. Jeff Patton, Area Manager, Atlantic Operations, ATT
4. Allen Bell, Distribution Support Manager, Georgia power
5. Wendell Holbrook, Director of Underground Locating Technology, Cobb EMC
6. Tom Tarver, Area Operations Manager, Southeast Division, Southern Natural Gas/El Paso Gas

#### Utilities Protection Center Staff

1. Claudette Campbell, Executive Director UPC
2. Meghan Chestnutt, Mgr, Corp. Communications UPC
3. Becky Creech, Liaison Manager, UPC
4. Terry McLaurin, Liaison Manager UPC

#### PHMSA Guests

1. Carl T. Johnson, PHMSA Administrator
2. Deborah Hinz, Congressional Specialist; Government, International and Public Affairs
3. Steve Fisher, Director Program Development
4. Mike Khayata, Community Assistance Technical Services (CATS)
5. Glynn Blanton, PHMSA
6. Allan Shuman, CGA Board Member and GA State Fire Marshall
7. Linda Daugherty, PHMSA Southern Region Director

#### Georgia Public Service Commission

1. Danny McGriff, Facilities Protection Unit Director
2. Gary Mason, Case Manager
3. Bill Edge, Public Information Officer
4. Commissioner Doug Everett
5. Commissioner Stan Wise
6. Commissioner Chuck Eaton, Chairman
7. Commissioner Bobby Baker
8. Tom Bond, Utilities Director

#### Stakeholders

1. Kerry Morgan, Integrity Manager, Williams Transco
2. Gregg Hammond, District Manager, Williams Transco
3. Tony Harrington, Assistant District Manager, Williams Transco
4. David Farrar, Right of Way Specialist, Williams Transco
5. Jackie Temples, 2008 Chair of the Georgia Utility Coordinating Council
6. Vikki McReynolds, Executive Director of the Georgia Utility Contractors Association
7. Bill West, Vice President, STS/UtiliQuest LLC.
8. Terri Rosamond, State Structure Access Coordinator CATV/GADOT/GOV, GUPS Administrator, NE District Right of Way, ATT