

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Iowa One Call and Common Ground Iowa remind Iowa residents to call 811
before all digging projects*

Des Moines, Iowa (April 1, 2011) – Next week, Gov. Terry Branstad will issue a proclamation observing April 2011 as Safe Digging Month in Iowa. The proclamation is a reminder for Iowa homeowners and professional excavators to call 811 before starting any digging project.

According to the Common Ground Alliance, an organization dedicated to public safety through damage prevention, one underground utility line (electric, gas, communications, water or sewer) is damaged by digging every three minutes nationwide. And failure to call 811 before digging has resulted in over 200,000 annual damages across the country including outages, blackouts, repair costs, fines and penalties, including the potential for serious injury.

The free call to 811 will connect people to Iowa One Call, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of the intent to dig. Professional locators are dispatched to the impending dig site to mark the locations of underground utilities using flags or spray paint. Once the area has been fully marked, safe digging can commence.

"We strongly encourage all individuals and companies in Iowa to comply with state law by calling 811 before beginning any digging projects," says Ben Booth, Public Relations/Communications Manager at Iowa One Call. "By having underground lines marked, casual diggers and professionals alike can significantly reduce the risk of striking utilities, thus avoiding accidents and inconvenient outages."

Every digging project, no matter how large or small, necessitates a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, fence or patio, building a deck or repairing drain tile are all examples of digging projects that require a call to 811 before starting. A good practice is to "white line" the dig area so that locators will work in the appropriate area. And once the utilities are located, remember to dig around the marks, not on them, and keep in mind that time, erosion or root structure growth can shift the locations of underground utilities.

Common Ground Iowa (CGI) is a regional partner of the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) and partners with Iowa One Call to promote damage prevention and public awareness. "Our joint focus is 'damage prevention through education'" states Cynthia Munyon from the Iowa Utilities Board and Chairman of CGI. "We take every opportunity to reinforce the importance of calling 811 before digging."

Visit www.iowaonecall.com, www.commongroundiowa.com, or www.call811.com for more information about 811 and the call-before-you-dig process or to find educational events and materials.

Interviews Available

Ben Booth, the Public Relations/Communications Manager at Iowa One Call, is available for interviews. Ben can be reached at 515-278-8700.

The information in this news release is accurate per Iowa Law (Chapter 480, Iowa Code). Please use this exact language to prevent any misinterpretation of the law. Call Iowa us if you have any questions regarding this law. Thank you

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