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For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

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Commission Reminds Georgians to Stay Safe by Calling 811 before Digging *April Is National Safe Digging Month*

ATLANTA, April 8, 2019 – The Georgia Public Service Commission reminds all Georgians that April is National Safe Digging Month. The law requires anyone who plans to excavate where underground utilities are located to call 8-1-1 before they dig. The process is simple and can prevent major damage that can endanger and inconvenience our communities and cause economic disruption. Damage from excavation activities to gas and water pipelines, along with sewer systems and buried distribution power lines, remains a leading cause of utility incidents resulting in death or injury.

Gov. Brian Kemp has signed a proclamation designating April as Safe Digging Month in Georgia.
<https://gov.georgia.gov/proclamations/2019>

Commission Chairman Lauren “Bubba” McDonald said: “Calling 8-1-1 is the best way to prevent damage to our underground utilities. Everyone loses when underground utilities are damaged. We are pleased to work with Georgia 811, our federal partners, and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) to prevent damages from occurring to the state’s underground utility facilities. Our common goals are to prevent the disruption of utility services and personal injuries that result from accidents which damage underground facilities.”

The Georgia Public Service Commission is charged with the enforcement of the state’s underground utilities damage prevention programs as a result of state legislation approved in 2000. The Commission also enforces federal pipeline safety standards under an agreement with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The Commission’s program is rated as one of the top five in the nation and serves as a model for other states to follow in reducing damages to underground utilities.

Using these programs, the Commission provides training and education for excavators and utilities in order to avoid accidents that can cause expensive and often dangerous damage to buried utilities. The Commission also works closely with Georgia 811, Inc. which accepts calls from the national federally mandated “Call before You Dig” Number 8-1-1. This “one call” system is free to contractors and excavators as well as homeowners and helps all excavators comply with the law.

Georgia 811, Inc. President and CEO Meghan Wade shares that, “Everyone can play an important role in keeping Georgia safe and connected. Contractors, excavators and homeowners all need to contact Georgia 811 before any digging project. This allows us to notify our utility members so their technicians can be dispatched to mark underground lines with paint and flags. Knowing the location of underground utilities helps keep you and your community safe, prevents service interruptions and helps avoid costly repairs or fines. Safe digging is

a shared responsibility and we are proud partner with the PSC and all of our stakeholders as we celebrate Governor Kemp’s proclamation of April as Safe Digging Month.”

The public, excavators and others can find resources available at www.call811.com and at www.Georgia811.com.

The Georgia Public Service Commission is a five-member constitutional agency that exercises its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies. For more information on the Commission visit our web site at www.psc.state.ga.us .

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