**NSDM/SPRING 2020 NEWS RELEASE -- AREA DISCOURAGING NON-ESSENTIAL DIGGING**

**[INSERT COMPANY LOGO]**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**[STAKEHOLDER] urging homeowners and contractors to postpone non-essential digging during COVID-19 emergency**

*Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, [STAKEHOLDER] is asking homeowners and contractors to delay any non-essential projects in [STATE] that require digging; anyone planning essential digging projects should continue to contact [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME] by calling 811 or placing an online request beforehand*

**CITY, State (MONTH DATE, 2020)** -- [STAKEHOLDER] is asking homeowners and contractors to delay non-essential digging in [STATE] during the COVID-19 pandemic to align with the strict actions taken to help stop the spread of the virus.

For any essential digging projects that must be completed during this time, homeowners and contractors should continue to utilize [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME]’s free-of-charge public safety service by calling 811 or placing an online request before digging to prevent accidental damage to critical utility services, including internet and other communications lines.

“As the public health crisis continues to put a strain on resources, and as we work to stop the spread of the virus by practicing social distancing, [STAKEHOLDER] is urging both homeowners and contractors in [STATE] to please postpone any non-essential digging during this time,” said [SPOKESPERSON NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION’S NAME]. “If you absolutely must complete projects that require digging, please practice safe digging by taking the important step of calling 811 beforehand. By doing so, you’ll be helping to prevent unintentional damage to key underground infrastructure and helping to keep your community safe and connected.”

Anyone who must complete an essential excavation project should go to their state 811 center’s website or call 811 a few business days before digging to request that the approximate location of buried utilities be marked. The state 811 center will take the online user or caller’s information and communicate it to local utility companies. Professional locators will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint, flags or both. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in serious injuries, service disruptions and costly repairs when gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines are damaged.

***About [STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION’S NAME]***

*Include brief information about your organization here.*

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