**NSDM/SPRING 2020 NEWS RELEASE -- AREA EMPHASIZING ONLINE REQUESTS**

**[INSERT COMPANY LOGO]**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**[STATE] residents planning spring digging projects encouraged to place online requests to have underground utilities marked beforehand**

*Using [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME]’s online tools to enter requests to have important underground lines marked by visiting [INSERT WEB ADDRESS] will allow homeowners and contractors to avoid longer-than-usual hold times for those calling in requests*

**CITY, State (MONTH DATE, 2020)** -- Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s more important than ever for communities to remain safe and connected to critical utility services, including internet and other communications lines. For anyone planning projects that require digging this spring in [STATE] -- including homeowners and contractors -- [STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION’S NAME] reminds them to utilize [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME]’s online tools to enter requests to notify the affected utility companies and have important underground lines marked prior to breaking ground.

As the public health crisis continues to put a strain on resources, visiting [INSERT WEB ADDRESS] to enter requests will allow homeowners and contractors to avoid longer-than-usual hold times for those calling in requests. Homeowners and contractors may still call [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME] by dialing 811 to make requests by phone but are encouraged to enter requests online if they are able to do so.

“[STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME] provides an essential service that protects buried utility lines and keeps communities safe and connected,” said [SPOKESPERSON NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION’S NAME]. “We want to remind everyone that they should continue to contact [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME] prior to digging projects to prevent damage to underground utilities, and we are encouraging everyone to do so by taking advantage of [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME]‘s online tools to submit requests to have underground lines marked. Doing so will help you avoid potentially longer-than-usual hold times over the phone.”

Anyone who plans to dig 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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