**NSDM/SPRING 2020 NEWS RELEASE -- AREA EXPERIENCING NORMAL DIGGING ACTIVITY**

**[INSERT COMPANY LOGO]**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**[STAKEHOLDER]’s essential services remain a priority during spring digging season to prevent damage to underground utilities**

*Amid the COVID-19 public health crisis, it is important that homeowners and contractors continue to contact [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME] by calling 811 or placing an online request before beginning projects that involve digging to maintain utility service and keep communities safe*

**CITY, State (MONTH DATE, 2020)** -- With the weather getting warmer and in observance of National Safe Digging Month in April, [STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION’S NAME] reminds homeowners and contractors that safe digging must remain a priority to prevent damage to critical utility services -- including internet and other communications lines -- and keep communities safe. **In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and as homeowners are spending more time than ever at home, utilizing [STATE 811 CENTER’S NAME]’s free-of-charge essential public safety service by calling 811 or placing an online request before digging will help residents avoid making circumstances worse by accidentally damaging buried utility lines.**

April marks the start of the busy spring digging season, and many homeowners are finding themselves with more time at home to begin home improvement projects that require digging, such as landscaping or installing a mailbox, deck or fence. 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.

“During these unprecedented times, it’s crucial to keep in mind the importance of keeping the public safe and connected to critical services in all situations. Anyone who plans to do digging projects without taking the important step of calling 811 beforehand is taking an unnecessary risk -- and one that could impact their entire community,” said [SPOKESPERSON NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION’S NAME]. “Calling 811 a few days before any planned home improvement projects that require digging -- including common landscaping projects like planting trees and shrubs -- is critical to preventing incidents like internet and other utility service outages, and serious injuries. It’s easy to enjoy DIY activities during social distancing while also staying safe and connected.”

As part of National Safe Digging Month, [STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION’S NAME] encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

* Always call 811 a few days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
* Plan ahead. Call on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
* Confirm that all lines have been marked.
* Consider moving the location of your project if it is near utility line markings.
* If a contractor has been hired, confirm that the contractor has called 811. Don’t allow work to begin if the lines aren’t marked.
* Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) for complete info.

Everyone who calls 811 a few days before digging is connected to a local one call notification center that will take the 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.

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

*Include brief information about your organization here.*

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