



Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Government of Saskatchewan declares April 2011 *Safe Digging Month* across Saskatchewan

The Government of Saskatchewan has today declared April *Safe Digging Month* across the province, in a coordinated effort with Sask 1st Call and the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA) to increase public awareness on the importance of working safely around underground infrastructure.

“Our economy is growing and so is our province. We know there’s going to be a lot of digging activity across Saskatchewan this spring – whether it’s new construction, or homeowners planning backyard projects – and we want this work done safely,” Corrections, Public Safety and Policing Minister D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert said. “Our Government, Crown utilities and industry partners support *Safe Digging Month* as a way to remind everyone to Call Before You Dig, so that people in our communities remain safe not only this month, but throughout the year.”

April is traditionally the start of the annual digging season in Saskatchewan. Homeowners are planning outside projects, and contractors are getting ready for another year. Uncontrolled excavation is the most frequent cause of damage to buried infrastructure and facilities.

“We continue to see tremendous growth in the number of calls received by Sask 1st Call, with over 106,000 line locate requests from contractors and homeowners last year alone. That means the large majority of people are getting the message,” said Cheryl Elmer, Manager of Sask 1st Call. “Those who don’t call before digging begins on their project are putting their workers, and the public, at risk.”

By ensuring the appropriate line locates occur before digging, homeowners and contractors are preventing unnecessary consequences including delay of their project, the disruption of essential services, property damage, environmental contamination, personal injury and even death.

“Our SCGA members believe this service is critical to the safety of the people of Saskatchewan – damage prevention is a shared responsibility,” said Nigel Spilman, the Saskatchewan Operations Manager for Badger Daylighting Inc., a member of the SCGA. “Taking the time to call your provincial line locating service not only helps keep the work site safe, but also saves your project time, and money, in the long run.”

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The Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA) is a member-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring worker and public safety, environmental protection and the integrity of services by promoting effective damage prevention practices in connection with underground infrastructure activities. For more information please go to www.scga.ca

Sask 1st Call is a not-for-profit “**Call Before You Dig**” underground facility location service for contractors and homeowners who are planning to dig or excavate. Within two working days of the request, the member companies of Sask 1st Call will locate the underground facilities at the project site, allowing work to continue without impacting buried infrastructure, or disrupting service to customers. Sask. 1st Call has 37 members (including SaskEnergy/TransGas, SaskPower, SaskTel and pipeline companies) and represents more than 400,000 kilometres of buried infrastructure across Saskatchewan. For more information please go to www.sask1stcall.com