



For Immediate Release:
April 17, 2017

Contact:
Susanne LaFrankie
(609) 292-0701
J. Gregory Reinert
(609) 777-3305

April is New Jersey Underground Damage Prevention Month

-NJ Board of Public Utilities urges residents to stay safe and “call 811 before you dig.” It’s the law-

TRENTON, N.J. – Today, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (Board) President Richard S. Mroz, along with NJ utility leaders, highlighted the critical importance of contractors, excavators and homeowners, taking the time to call 811 before beginning any digging projects. Mroz and the others marked “Underground Damage Prevention Month” on the steps of the War Memorial near the State House.

“We want homeowners and the public to remain safe and help protect the state’s infrastructure by calling 811 before they dig,” said President Mroz. “The Board has invested millions of dollars during the Christie administration in infrastructure projects improving reliability and resiliency as well as accelerating the replacement of bare steel and cast iron gas pipes.”

According to a recent national public opinion survey sponsored by the Common Ground Alliance, 51 percent of homeowners who plan to dig put themselves and others at risk by not calling 811 to “mark-out” underground utilities before beginning landscaping, construction or do-it-yourself projects.

President Mroz also presented a Proclamation from Governor Christie recognizing April as New Jersey Underground Damage Prevention Month. The event is part of the Common Ground Alliance’s (CGA) National Safe Digging Month.

“Calling 811 can save lives and it is the law in New Jersey,” NJCGA member Bill Tappin said. “We want homeowners to be vigilant, to ensure hired contractors call 811 requesting a “mark out” before digging to avoid hitting underground pipelines, conduits, wires and cables. The service is free and absolutely critical to avoiding serious injuries, service disruptions and costly repairs to vital utility services.”

New Jersey’s One Call Center receives over 600,000 calls per year resulting in over 3 million “mark outs.” Unlawful excavations are the leading cause of underground infrastructure damage. Last year, the NJBPU collected over \$1 million dollars in fines as a result of un-marked non-compliant excavation projects.

“The process is simple,” said Andrew Hendry, President and CEO, New Jersey Utilities Association. “When homeowners call 811, they are automatically connected to the One Call center, which collects details about their digging project. The center contacts the separate utility companies, who send workers to mark the locations of underground lines with colored flags, paint or both.”

As part of National Safe Digging Month, New Jersey encourages homeowners to take the following pre-digging steps:

- Call 811 at least three full business days before each project to have underground pipes, wires and equipment located. Utility workers will place color coded markers or paint where utility lines are buried.
- Confirm that the contractor has called 811.
- Absolutely do not allow work to begin if lines are not marked.
- Visit www.call811.com for complete information

###