



# New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Board of Public Utilities joins with Utility and Excavation industries to implement new 8-1-1 "Call Before You Dig" Number**

*May 2007 is "New Jersey Underground Damage Prevention Month"*

(Newark, NJ) –The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) announced the activation of a new, free 8-1-1 number as a fast and easy way to contact the state's One Call Center. The activation of 811 coincides with the start of a public education campaign to raise awareness about the new number and encourage professional excavators and homeowners to always "call before they dig." As part of the education and awareness campaign, acting Governor Richard J. Codey has proclaimed the month of May "*New Jersey Underground Damage Prevention Month*."

"New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the country and underground facilities exist everywhere," said NJBPU President Jeanne M. Fox. "Calling the One Call Center will reduce service delays, prevent damage to property and save lives; and it is even easier now with the activation of 811."

In New Jersey, State law requires that anyone planning to excavate call for a free mark out of facilities at least three business days before digging. When the NJ One Call Center receives a request, it then alerts the appropriate facilities owners to identify any underground lines or services in the area to prevent damage and protect lives and property.

While New Jersey has long had a single toll-free number for its One Call Center, 811 is the new Federal Communications Commission's designated **national** number, created to eliminate confusion of multiple "call before you dig" numbers across the country. Callers can still reach NJ One Call at the traditional toll-free number 1-800-272-1000, however, the new 811 number offers increased speed and convenience and can be used from any landline, cell or pay phone.

Recognizing the need to raise awareness about the new number and the issue of damage to underground facilities, members of the utility industry joined with the excavation community, state and local government and other concerned parties to form the New Jersey affiliate of Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a national organization dedicated to reducing damages to underground facilities.

Will Carey, a longtime PSE&G employee and chairman of the Common Ground Alliance, is pleased with the organization's progress.

"Thanks to the good work of this group, partnerships are forming and flourishing throughout the State. We're making headway in our effort to ensure that facilities are located, marked and protected before digging begins," Carey said. "This is proof that great things can be accomplished when you join forces to achieve a common goal."

CGA is encouraging municipalities to issue their own proclamations each year declaring May as New Jersey Underground Damage Prevention Month. Damages affect everyone in a municipality. Citizens, home owners, business owners, and first responders such as fire, police and rescue squad personnel are put in harm's way every time someone digs before they call for a mark out.

*About the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU)*

*The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities is a state agency and regulatory authority mandated to ensure safe, adequate, and proper utility services at reasonable rates for New Jersey customers. Critical services regulated by the NJBPU include natural gas, electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and cable television. The Board has general oversight responsibility for monitoring utility service, responding to consumer complaints, and investigating utility accidents. To find out more about the NJBPU, visit our web site at [www.bpu.state.nj.us](http://www.bpu.state.nj.us)*