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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Beshear Proclaims Kentucky 8-1-1 Underground Facility Protection Day

Focus is on preventing damage to buried utility lines

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 11, 2011) – Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear has issued a proclamation designating today as Kentucky 8-1-1 Underground Facility Protection Day.

“Kentucky has made a concerted effort to reduce the number of incidents of excavators hitting buried utility lines,” Gov. Beshear said. “But it is clear that we still have work to do in increasing awareness of the call-before-you-dig requirements in state law and in promoting the use of the 811 statewide toll-free telephone number to request marking of buried utility lines.”

Kentucky Public Service Commission Chairman David Armstrong said that digging into buried lines is more than just a problem for utility companies.

“Such incidents often threaten public health and safety by interrupting vital services such as electricity, water or telephone,” he said. “The result also can be substantial damage to other property and, in the case of electric and gas lines, severe injury or death.”

In recent years, Kentucky has taken several steps to reduce damage to buried lines. The 811 number was adopted in 2007 as an easy-to-remember number to call to have utilities located prior to excavation. A 2008 statute expanded enforcement of laws requiring underground utility lines to be located and marked prior to most excavation or demolition activity.

Armstrong noted that dig-ins nevertheless continue to disrupt utility service. For example, a cut telephone cable left 500 Kenton County customers without service in June, some of them for nearly a week, he said.

“Losing your telephone line can compromise access to enhanced 911 emergency service, which may be available only through landline telephones,” Armstrong said. “That is much more than just an inconvenience if someone needs medical, fire or police assistance.”

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Tim Vaughn, regulatory affairs director of Kentucky 811, the state's call-before-you-dig center, thanked Gov. Beshear and the PSC for their efforts to help educate the public about the importance of protecting buried utility lines.

“Governor Beasher’s strong support and the ongoing efforts of the Kentucky Public Service Commission help us immeasurably in reinforcing the message that we convey on a daily basis to utilities, contractors and the public,” Vaughn said.

Kentucky 811 is a voluntary organization with more than 300 members, including most of Kentucky’s largest utility service providers. A call to Kentucky 811 will result in location of underground facilities owned by its members.

Kentucky 811 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To obtain locations for underground facilities owned by utility service providers that do not belong to Kentucky 811, it is necessary to notify the company directly. A list of all owners of underground utility lines may be obtained from the county clerk.

More information about Kentucky 811 is available at its website, www.kentucky811.org. To request a copy of a handbook for excavators, go the site and click on the “Ask Tim” link: http://www.kentucky811.org/contact_us.php.

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Energy and Environment Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in Kentucky and has approximately 100 employees.

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FOLLOW THE PSC ON TWITTER AT KYPSC

GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

Proclamation

by
Steven L. Beshear
Governor

of the
Commonwealth of Kentucky



To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come:

- WHEREAS,** The provision of safe and reliable utility service is essential to the public health and economic well-being of all Kentuckians; and
- WHEREAS,** Utility service to Kentucky homes and businesses is disrupted on a daily basis when buried lines are damaged or severed by improper excavation activity; and
- WHEREAS,** Digging into buried lines damages vital infrastructure, and can pose a threat of injury or death to workers and the public; and
- WHEREAS,** Service interruptions can threaten the health and welfare of utility customers who rely on electric, gas, water and telecommunication services; and
- WHEREAS,** Kentucky's "Underground Facility Damage Prevention Act" requires that anyone conducting excavation near underground utility lines request that those lines be properly located and marked by calling 8-1-1 or the utility company; and
- WHEREAS,** Kentucky's "8-1-1" toll-free "call-before-you-dig" telephone number is the only statewide, around-the-clock resource for identifying underground facility locations, and 312 of Kentucky's utility providers - including all of the major companies - are voluntary members of Kentucky 8-1-1; and
- WHEREAS,** Although public awareness of underground utility protection has increased since 8-1-1 was established, the ongoing problem of damage to underground facilities indicates a need for further public education;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, STEVEN L. BESHEAR, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, do hereby proclaim August 11, 2011, as

KENTUCKY 8-1-1 UNDERGROUND FACILITY PROTECTION DAY

in Kentucky, and call upon all Kentuckians to familiarize themselves and comply with the before-you-dig requirements in Kentucky and to use the Kentucky 8 1 1 service.

DONE AT THE CAPITOL, in the City of Frankfort this 9th day of August, in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand Eleven and in the 220th year of the Commonwealth.

Handwritten signature of Steven L. Beshear in black ink.

STEVEN L. BESHEAR
GOVERNOR

Handwritten signature of Elaine N. Walker in black ink.

Elaine N. Walker
Secretary of State