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PHMSA Continues Aggressive Pipeline Safety Push with New PSA *Call 811 Before You Dig to 'Avoid A Grimm Situation'*

WASHINGTON – As part of the Department of Transportation’s commitment to pipeline safety, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today launched a public service announcement reminding everyone from backyard gardeners to professional excavators to call 811 toll-free before digging.

There are 2.5 million miles of pipeline in our nation, and one-third of major pipeline accidents are caused by excavation damage, which can be fatal. Damage caused by excavation is almost entirely preventable by calling 811 before digging. May 1 marks the five-year anniversary of the launch of the 811 program.

“Pipeline safety is a top priority at DOT. Educating the public about how to stay safe around pipelines is a major part of our efforts,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “Most people don’t realize what’s underground, but there’s a way to find out. Stay safe. Call 811 before you dig.”

Secretary LaHood and Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administrator Cynthia Quarterman were joined today by representatives from John Deere, the Common Ground Alliance and Tri-State Boring, who pledged to help promote the 811 Call Before You Dig message to the public. Actions that businesses, communities and the general public can take to promote 811 include:

- Share the [811 link](#) and PSA on social media accounts
- Ask people to take the [811 Promise](#)
- Post the [811 logo](#) and link on websites
- Post the [811 logo](#) in email signatures

“Damage prevention is a shared responsibility, and I commend those who joined us today and pledged to help tell everyone about calling 811 before digging,” said PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “Calling 811 is toll-free and hassle-free, and so is making sure your friends and neighbors know about it.”

The Call 811 Call Before You Dig PSA is set in a fairytale world, where the characters live blissfully unaware of the dangers that lurk below. They are advised to “Avoid a Grimm Situation” by calling 811 before they dig. The PSA is available in video and audio formats in English and Spanish – a 30-second TV spot and 30- and 60-second radio spots. PHMSA will also provide a TV PSA that states can use to deliver customized 811 messages. All spots are available at www.phmsa.dot.gov.

Pipelines deliver most of the energy used to heat, cool and operate the nation’s homes, cars and businesses. Also underground are utility lines that provide power, cable and water. By calling 811, a team will be dispatched to mark pipelines and utility lines, enabling safe digging.

The Call 811 Before You Dig PSA is part of PHMSA’s push to improve pipeline safety, including increased [enforcement actions](#), proposed data collection initiatives, and aggressive public education efforts. It follows Secretary LaHood’s “[Call To Action](#),” asking pipeline operators to repair, replace or rehabilitate aging pipelines, and the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011, which President Obama recently signed. PHMSA also has several pipeline safety proposals out for comment, including one that addresses [excavation damage prevention](#). Visit PHMSA’s [Pipeline Safety Awareness](#) website and access the [state pipeline profiles](#) to learn more.

In addition, the President’s [Fiscal Year 2013 budget request](#) includes a 60 percent increase above Fiscal Year 2012 for PHMSA’s pipeline safety program to improve safety and increase accountability by hiring more inspectors, increasing coordination with states and educating the public.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.5 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.