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TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS – Kevin Chmura, director of public relations for JULIE, Inc., was the recent recipient of the Ron Olitsky Award from the national Common Ground Alliance (CGA) for significant contributions in the damage prevention industry. This prestigious award was granted to the CGA member whose dedication and service to the organization went above and beyond the call of duty during a given year.

This May, the CGA will kick-off an awareness campaign to accompany the roll-out of 811 as the national call-before-you-dig number. Members of the CGA Educational Programs Committee – and particularly Chmura and the five members of the core 811 task team – have worked diligently for the past two years to ensure a successful campaign.

“We are very proud that Kevin was recognized for his efforts to protect underground infrastructure and promote damage prevention awareness,” said Mark A. Frost, executive director for JULIE, Inc. “The six committee volunteers who took on this task from around the country worked together as a team in the true spirit of shared responsibility - engaging stakeholder support on a national level well beyond any previous educational program within the industry.”

Chmura, a Tinley Park resident, has been with JULIE, Inc. since 2001 and has created and implemented award-winning public safety and education campaigns for the not-for-profit organization.

In 2005, CGA established the Ron Olitsky Award as a memorial to Olitsky, of Southern California Underground Service Alert, who served on the CGA Board since the organization’s establishment and development of the Common Ground Study of One Call System and Damage Prevention Best Practices in 1999.

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Early on in the process, the education committee solicited these volunteers to serve on a smaller task team to manage the development of the campaign. Since that time, this team has shared the great responsibility of evaluating and recommending contractors to work with the CGA in developing a campaign; working with these contractors to successfully manage campaign development while keeping CGA's objectives and goals in mind; and following a process to ensure stakeholder participation at every level of development.

During this past year, the 811 core task team dedicated countless hours to the task. The team attended more than 15 team meetings and 30 conference calls as well as multiple candidate selection presentations. This team also reviewed more than 30 proposals from firms and individuals interested in contributing to part of the 811 campaign – and throughout the entire process, this group of individuals worked to ensure their recommendations were the best for the CGA and its stakeholders.

811 is the new FCC-designated national N-11 number created to eliminate confusion of multiple "Call Before You Dig" numbers across the country. This quick and efficient service connects callers with local One Call Centers who notify the appropriate local utilities, who then send crews to the requested site to mark the approximate location of underground lines for free.

JULIE, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation that serves as a notification service for underground facility owners, taking information about planned excavations and distributing this information to its membership. It is then the responsibility of each facility owner to mark the location of their underground facilities at the excavation site. JULIE neither owns nor marks any underground facilities. For more information, visit JULIE, Inc. on the web at www.illinois1call.com.

CGA is a member-driven association of nearly 1,400 individuals, organizations and sponsors in every facet of the underground utility industry. Established in 2000, CGA is committed to saving lives and preventing damage to American underground infrastructure by promoting effective damage prevention practices. CGA has established itself as the leading organization in an effort to reduce damages to underground facilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. For more information, visit CGA on the web at www.commongroundalliance.com.

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