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JULIE, INC. RECOGNIZES APRIL AS ILLINOIS SAFE DIGGING MONTH

Statewide initiative is part of national campaign to call 811 before all spring digging projects, including Earth Day and Arbor Day

JOLIET, ILLINOIS (March 30, 2009) — JULIE, Inc., Illinois' One-Call System, has declared April 1 as the official start of Illinois Safe Digging Month, a statewide initiative aimed at raising awareness of the importance of notifying JULIE by calling 811 before all digging projects to reduce the risk of striking underground utility lines and potentially causing community damage or personal injury.

Throughout April, Illinois will join other stakeholders of the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the national association dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and those who dig near them, in leading local campaigns across the country to spread awareness about 811, the national call-before-you-dig number, and the importance of calling before digging.

"It's imperative that Illinois citizens follow the state law that requires all underground utility lines to be marked prior to breaking ground — both throughout the month of April and year-round," said Kevin Chmura, director of public relations for JULIE, Inc. "This is a free call and service."

Illinois state law requires all homeowners and contractors to notify JULIE prior to digging to have underground utility lines marked, regardless of whether they are planting a sapling or excavating a major surface. Failure to call 811 before digging results in more than 256,000 unintentional hits annually across the country — that's an average of 700 hits per day.

Homeowners and contractors can dial 811, the national call-before-you-dig number, to reach JULIE, which will notify the appropriate utility companies of the intent to dig. Professional locators are sent to the requested digging site to mark the approximate locations of underground lines with flags or spray paint.

In addition to common spring digging projects, such as landscaping or deck-building, JULIE recognizes that many people will be planting trees for Earth Day and Arbor Day projects on April 22 and 24 respectively. It is important to remember to notify JULIE by calling 811 at least two business days ahead of any volunteer events to have underground utility lines marked before digging begins.

“Arbor Day and Earth Day are great opportunities for Illinois citizens to give back to the environment by planting a tree or doing other outdoor beautification projects, but it’s imperative to call 811 before you start,” said Chmura. “Don’t create unintended consequences this Earth and Arbor Day. Call 811 before all digging projects.”

Professional excavators and homeowners can now reach JULIE, Inc. by simply calling 811 or 800-892-0123 or by entering their own locate request online at www.illinois1call.com. JULIE covers the entire state of Illinois, outside the city limits of Chicago (Chicago is covered by DIGGER—811 or 312-744-7000).

Visit www.call811.com or www.illinois1call.com for more Illinois state information about 811 and the call-before-you-dig process.

About CGA

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.

About JULIE Inc.

As one of the largest industry one-call systems in the nation, JULIE, Inc. (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) represents 1,760 members and annually receives 1.1 million locate requests. Based in Joliet and celebrating 35 years of damage prevention in 2009, the not-for-profit organization provides professional excavators and homeowners with a free service to contact for the locating and marking of underground utility facilities. For more information, visit www.illinois1call.com.

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