



Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Government of Saskatchewan declares April 2013 *Safe Digging Month* across Saskatchewan

Record-setting snowfall in many areas of Saskatchewan may be delaying the start of prime construction season, but educating the public about working safely around underground infrastructure is more important than ever. To increase public awareness, the Government of Saskatchewan, together with Sask 1st Call and the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA), is once again declaring April as Safe Digging Month across the province.

“There is a great amount of construction activity planned this year. With this high concentration of activity, it is extremely important that contractors and homeowners alike remember to *Call Before You Dig*,” said Government Relations Minister Jim Reiter. “Preventing damage to our Province’s underground infrastructure is a shared responsibility, and one that is vital to maintaining public and work site safety.”

Homeowners planning outside projects and contractors preparing for another construction season are encouraged to adhere to a simple message: before you dig, know what’s below. Sask 1st Call hopes that anyone planning underground construction ensures that the appropriate line locates are completed before breaking ground on any project.

“Sask 1st Call isn’t just for contractors doing major construction projects. It’s for homeowners putting in a new fence or deck, planting a tree or any other activity that requires digging,” said Manager of Sask 1st Call Barb Tchozewski. “While line locate requests were up 10 per cent last year, even one hit to underground infrastructure is too many. Sask 1st Call is here to keep workers, homeowners and communities safe, especially during the busy construction season that will soon be underway.”

Uncontrolled excavation continues to be the most frequent cause of damage to buried infrastructure and facilities. Requesting line locates prior to starting any underground construction work and following safe excavation practices, helps avoid the unnecessary consequences such as costly project delays, damage costs, disruption of essential services, property damage, environmental concerns, personal injury and even death.

“*Safe Digging Month* is a great way to remind the people of Saskatchewan of the importance of work site safety, as well as following effective and safe excavation practices every step of the way,” said SCGA Executive Director Daryl Posehn. “Construction activity in the province continues to increase and that also means that potential risks and hazards go up as well. Unnecessary risks are taken by both

homeowners and contractors when they decide not to plan ahead before beginning construction work.”

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For more information please contact:

Daryl Posehn
Executive Director
Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance
Ph: (306) 536-2524
Email: dposehn@scga.ca

Barb Tchozewski
Manager
Sask 1st Call
Ph: (306) 777-9507
Email: btchozewski@saskenergy.com

Nicole Fellingner
Communications
Government Relations
Ph: (306) 787-2687
Email: nicole.fellinger@gov.sk.ca

The **SCGA** is a member-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring worker and public safety, environmental protection and the integrity of services by promoting effective damage prevention practices in connection with underground infrastructure activities. For more information please go to www.scga.ca

Sask 1st Call is a not-for-profit “**Call Before You Dig**” underground facility location service for contractors and homeowners who are planning to dig or excavate. Within two working days of the request, the member companies of Sask 1st Call will locate the underground facilities at the project site, allowing work to continue without impacting buried infrastructure, or disrupting service to customers. Sask. 1st Call has 45 members (including SaskEnergy/TransGas, SaskPower, SaskTel and pipeline companies) and represents more than 400,000 kilometres of buried infrastructure across Saskatchewan. For more information please go to www.sask1stcall.com