



GROUND-BREAKING FIRST PROGRAM TARGETS YOUTH IN SAFETY BEHAVIORS

Regina, Saskatchewan – July 15, 2021 - Underground facility damage is a \$1 billion problem in Canada every year – and Saskatchewan will become the first jurisdiction in North America to use an innovative online youth training program to help tackle it.

The Saskatchewan Safety Council (SSC), the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA) and the Heavy Construction Safety Association of Saskatchewan (HCSAS) have partnered together to create an online safety construction program, aimed at youth aged 14-21. The “Ground Disturbance for Saskatchewan Workers” training initiative, available on the SSC website at www.sasksafety.org, will instill safe working skills to potential future young employees in the field.

“The cost to the economy of these incidents is significant, but more importantly, there is also a risk of injury and even death from events that are most often entirely preventable,” said Derrick Mann, SCGA President. Mann added that developing safety habits when one is young “produces a lifetime of benefits” by that person becoming a role model to champion safe behavior.

The approximately 3-hour online course is free, delivered via the website of SSC. If the participant passes the course, they will receive a recognized safety construction certificate, immediately downloadable upon completion. The program is a key component in the Council’s Career Safety Education Program, which has been designed by industry experts to address the most common injuries to new workers in their respective fields.

“New and young workers often find some of their first jobs in sectors that deal with ground disturbance concerns. Every year, we hear statistics of people being injured and sometimes killed in this line of work, but these are not statistics, they are our friends, neighbours, nieces, nephews, and children,” said Ryan Jacobson, CEO of the Saskatchewan Safety Council. “Through this multi-agency collaboration and the financial support of the SCGA, we can make sure that every person who needs to take ground disturbance training to learn about the hazards and risks in their work, can do so without barriers.”

The partners believe this training can reduce the incidents caused by striking underground utility infrastructure or soil collapse. The course includes content such as ground disturbance and hazards assessment, reporting damage and line locating, daylighting, control zones, color codes, soil conditions and emergency assessment among other things.

Young workers and those new to jobs that work in soil, who are pursuing careers in agriculture, heavy construction, residential construction, landscaping, or with companies that provide services to utility companies are encouraged to complete this free training course.

“Our members are continuously involved with detailed projects that involve working around underground infrastructure for long periods of time,” said Natalya Uchacz, Chief Operational Officer, of the HCSAS. “As we see younger employees entering our industry constantly, this is a fantastic opportunity to build that safety skill mentality right as they start their careers.”

Construction activity has been rising in the province, even during COVID-19 times. There were 151,282 requests for line locates in 2020, a close to seven per cent increase from the year previous, and more than 700 contacts with underground facilities reported in 2020.

Currently, programs are contributed to Career Safety Education by Heavy Construction Safety Association of Saskatchewan (HCSAS); Saskatchewan Association of Safe Workplaces in Health (SASWA); Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA); Saskatchewan Safety Council; and WorkSafe Saskatchewan.

Today’s announcement is an industry first for our province and we are all incredibly pleased to be engaging the future workers as they are setting the path for their careers.

For more information or to arrange interviews contact:

Shannon Doka, Executive Director,
Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA)
306-539-2169 or executivedirector@scga.ca

Our social channels:

