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## News

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### **U.S. Department of Transportation Awards \$1 Million in Grants to State One Call Centers** *Effort supports the nation's 811 'Call Before You Dig' Hotline to further reduce damages to underground utilities*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) today announced that over one million dollars in One Call grants will be awarded to 30 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to support 811, the nation's "Call Before You Dig Hotline" that informs the public about safe digging, which will help protect communities from accidents and damages related to digging that strikes pipelines and other underground utilities.

"Pipeline safety is a top priority at DOT, and almost every serious pipeline accident can be prevented with a call to 811," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "These grants will help spread the word about calling 811 before digging, a crucial message to protect our infrastructure, our communities and the environment."

When calling 811, callers are connected to the appropriate one call center in their state. Within 48 hours, local utility companies will visit the property to mark the location of any underground lines, pipes and cables before digging begins.

Designated in 2007, the 811 national telephone number has proven to be one of the most effective ways to prevent damage and service interruptions to pipelines and other underground utilities. Between 2008 and 2012, excavation damage to natural gas distribution pipelines decreased by 50 percent compared to the five years prior. Additionally, damages to all pipeline types due to excavation decreased by 41 percent over the same five year span.

"Our goal is to make 811 as well-known as 911, and thanks to the efforts of one call centers throughout the nation, and with the help of the public safety community, the word

is getting out,” said PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “These grants will further promote the important message of Know what’s below and always call 811 before you dig. Stay safe.”

The states receiving One Call grants this year include:

- Alabama - \$9,000
- Connecticut - \$40,864
- Colorado - \$34,508
- Georgia - \$40,864
- Illinois - \$40,864
- Iowa - \$20,862
- Kansas - \$40,864
- Louisiana - \$40,864
- Maine - \$40,864
- Michigan - \$18,060
- Minnesota - \$ 40,864
- Mississippi - \$40,722
- Missouri - \$9,000
- Montana - \$18,081
- Nebraska - \$40,722
- Nevada - \$40,864
- New Hampshire - \$40,864
- New Jersey - \$40,864
- New Mexico - \$40,864
- New York - \$40,836
- North Carolina - \$27,081
- North Dakota - \$9,000
- Oregon - \$37,191
- Puerto Rico - \$9,000
- Rhode Island - \$40,864
- South Carolina - \$9,000
- South Dakota - \$40,784

- Texas - \$40,784
- Vermont - \$40,864
- Virginia - \$ 15,158
- Washington, DC - \$40,864
- Wyoming - \$8,690

Since 1995, PHMSA's One Call grant program has provided funding to enhance state damage prevention programs such as upgrades for communications systems, public information and education efforts and underground pipeline location technology.

PHMSA is highlighting "Call 811 Before You Dig" on its website along with other educational resources Americans can use to promote hazmat and pipeline safety in their communities.

The effort to educate the public about 811 and safe digging is part of PHMSA's push to improve pipeline safety, including increased enforcement actions, proposed data collection initiatives, aggressive public education efforts, and a proposed rule on excavation damage prevention. The National Association of State Fire Marshals, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Volunteer Fire Council are also helping to promote 811.

*The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6 million mile pipeline transportation system and the safe transportation of over 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.*

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