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NEWS RELEASE

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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION JOINS WITH GOVERNOR DEAL IN PROCLAIMING APRIL DIG SAFELY MONTH

ATLANTA, April 13, 2011 – Georgia Governor Nathan Deal has proclaimed April 2011 as Dig Safely Month in Georgia. During a ceremony at the State Capitol, Governor Deal presented a proclamation to Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald, Jr. and Commissioner Tim Echols, who accepted on behalf of the Georgia Public Service Commission, and to Georgia 811 President and CEO Claudette Campbell. Also present were members of the Commission staff and representatives from the Georgia Utility Contractors Association, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Power Company, Atlanta Gas Light Company, Atmos Energy, AT&T and STS who are involved in the prevention of damage to Georgia’s underground utility infrastructure.

The Public Service Commission is charged with the enforcement of the state’s underground utilities damage prevention programs under legislation approved in 2000. The Commission’s program is rated one of the top five in the nation and serves as a model for other states to follow in reducing damages to underground utilities. The Commission works to educate excavators and utilities in order to avoid accidents that can cause expensive and often dangerous damage to buried utilities.

Commission Chairman Stan Wise said, “We are joining the Governor and all interested groups in working together toward a common goal to prevent damages and personal injuries from occurring to the state’s underground utility facilities. In addition, we work to prevent the interruption of utility service as well. Since the passage of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act in 2000, the state has built a damage prevention program second to none in the nation.”

"Excavators are only as good as the marks on the ground," said Commissioner Tim Echols. "That is why calling before you dig is so important."

Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald, Jr. added, “For those states who do not currently have a damage prevention program, I would issue a challenge to follow Georgia’s lead and begin such a program, it is the right thing to do.”

The Commission works in close cooperation with Georgia 811 which accepts calls from the national federally mandated “Call before You Dig” Number 8-1-1. This “one call” system is free to contractors and excavators as well as homeowners and helps all excavators comply with the law.

The official photograph from the proclamation event is below.



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