

GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION
Boise, ID
March 29, 2011

Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter issued a proclamation March 24 announcing April as Idaho Safe Digging Month. The proclamation reminds Idaho homeowners to call 811 before starting any outdoor digging projects.

April marks the start of spring digging season, so utility companies, the Public Utilities Commission and Gov. Otter are encouraging homeowners to call 811 before they dig so they can prevent injuries, property damage and inconvenient outages. Once every three minutes, a utility line is damaged somewhere in the United States by digging. One-third of these incidents are caused by failure of the professional excavator or homeowner to call 811 before beginning the digging project.

When calling 811, homeowners are connected to "Password" (Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone counties) or "Digline" (all other counties), which notifies the appropriate utility companies of the intent to dig. Professional locators are then sent to the requested digging site to mark the approximate locations of underground lines with flags or spray paint. Once lines have been accurately marked, digging can begin around marked lines.

"We join the governor in strongly encouraging individuals and companies to call 811 before they begin digging," said Hart Gilchrist, manager of operations services at Intermountain Gas. "By having underground lines marked, homeowners are making an important decision that can help keep them and their communities safe and connected."

"It's a free call and it's a free service that can certainly prevent major problems for the homeowner and others," said Jim Kempton, outgoing chairman of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission.

Striking a single line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and inconvenient outages. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, necessitates a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, putting in a fence, building a deck and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects that need a call to 811 before starting.

Visit www.call811.com <<http://www.call811.com/>> for more information about 811 and the call-before-you-dig process.