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NEWS RELEASE

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PSC Reminds Kentuckians to Call 811 Before They Dig *Construction season brings increase in accidents*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 8, 2009) – As construction and excavation activity in Kentucky rises with the temperature, so does the likelihood of damage to underground utility lines.

“Hitting a buried utility line is, at best, a costly inconvenience,” Kentucky Public Service Commission Chairman David Armstrong says. “Hitting an electric or gas line can be a life-threatening experience.

“That is why the PSC is reminding everyone – whether a contractor or a homeowner – to call 811 before digging anywhere there might be underground utility lines,” he said.

A call to 811 will bring someone to mark the location of any electric, gas, water, sewer or telecommunication lines. While Kentucky law requires a call to 811 only if mechanized excavation equipment will be used, the PSC recommends a call prior to any excavation.

State law also allows local jurisdictions to issue citations and collect fines from excavators who fail to arrange for marking of underground lines.

The call-before-you-dig service is operated by Kentucky 811, a consortium of utility companies, local governments and others with an interest in preventing damage to buried utility lines. The PSC works closely with Kentucky 811 and regularly investigates accidents or outages caused by someone digging into a buried utility line.

“We see many of the instances of damage to underground lines caused by failures to mark the lines prior to excavation,” Armstrong said. “We also see a surprising number of cases in which the markings are in place, but have not been heeded.”

All major utility companies in Kentucky, along with many smaller companies and municipal utilities, are members of Kentucky 811. There is no membership fee. Members pay a nominal fee for each request made to Kentucky 811 for marking of their lines.

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Energy and Environment Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in Kentucky and has approximately 100 employees.