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National Fuel Reminds the Public to Call Before You Dig

Erie, Pa., Aug. 11, 2020 – In recognition of National 8/11 Day today, National Fuel reminds homeowners and professional contractors to Call Before You Dig. Before starting any excavation projects this year, call 811, a toll-free national phone number, or visit www.call811.com. In Pennsylvania, homeowners and contractors should call 811 at least three and no more than 10 business days in advance of the start of their projects.

The national 811 phone number connects callers with local One Call Centers. Operators record the excavation locations and notify National Fuel of callers' plans. National Fuel then dispatches professional locators to mark the approximate locations of its lines. It's a fast, easy way to protect yourself and those around you. When a locate request for utility lines precedes an excavation, damage is avoided 99 percent of the time, according to industry studies.

“All excavation projects— even small or shallow digging landscaping projects like planting trees and shrubs, or installing a fence or mailbox require a call,” said Carly Manino, spokesperson for National Fuel. “Many of the pipeline leaks and emergencies we respond to each year occur when homeowners and businesses dig on their properties without knowing the location of underground utility lines. These types of accidents can be easily avoided by calling 811, a free service for homeowners, before digging.”

The Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a national association representing the utility industry and committed to saving lives and preventing damage to underground infrastructure, states that:

- An estimated 31 million homeowners are planning to complete home improvement projects that involve digging this year.
- Nearly 40 percent of homeowners planning to dig will put utility service at risk by not first calling 811.
- The most popular planned DIY home projects that involve digging include:
 - Planting a tree or shrub
 - Building a patio or deck
 - Building a fence
 - Installing a mailbox
- With so much at stake for public health and safety right now, the millions of Americans who plan to do DIY digging projects this year without taking the important step of calling 811 beforehand are taking an unnecessary risk—and one that could impact their entire community.

As always, if you smell gas, leave fast! If a rotten-egg natural gas odor is present, leave the premises immediately and call National Fuel's emergency line, 1-800-444-3130, from a different location. If you smell gas outdoors, call National Fuel's emergency number and provide the address nearest to the site of the odor. To learn more about natural gas safety, visit www.nationalfuelgas.com/forhome/gassafety.aspx.

National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation is the Utility segment of National Fuel Gas Company, a diversified energy company that is engaged in a number of natural gas-related activities. The Utility provides natural gas service to more than 740,000 customers in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.nationalfuelgas.com.