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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
Hannah Hubert
NIPSCO Communications
248-444-5576

# August 11 Serves As Convenient Reminder for Indiana Residents to Contact 811 Before Digging

**Merrillville, Ind.** — August 11 is almost here, and NIPSCO hopes that the 8/11 date on the calendar will serve as a natural reminder for residents to call 811 or visit 811now.com at least two business days prior to any digging project to have underground utility lines marked. With more people at home during pandemic restrictions, and summer a peak time to work on home improvement projects, it's more essential than ever that residents remember to dig safely.

In 2019, through the first seven months of the year, NIPSCO experienced 102 gas line damages by homeowners caused from the failure to contact 811 prior to digging. For this same time period in 2020, homeowner damages have already totaled 163; nearly a 40 percent increase. The number of homeowner damages began to rise in March and peaked in June. And of those, notably, 45 percent were the result of homeowners completing fence installations and landscaping projects.

When calling 811, homeowners and contractors are connected to Indiana 811, the local one call center, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of their intent to dig. Requests can also be conveniently made online at 811now.com. Professional locators then arrive at the digging site to mark the approximate locations of underground lines with flags, spray paint or both. Requests should be made at least two business days prior to digging, and this service is provided free of charge.

Every few minutes, an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first contacting 811. Striking a single line can cause injury, repair costs, inconvenient outages and fines. With more people staying home these days and relying on their utilities to work and communicate, inconvenient outages are important to avoid. Every digging project, no matter how big or small, warrants contacting 811 by phone or online. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are just some examples of digging projects that need a call to 811 or a visit to 811now.com before starting.

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"On Aug. 11 and throughout the year, we remind homeowners and professional contractors alike to use the free 811 service before digging to reduce the risk of striking an underground utility line," said Dan Douglas, Senior Vice President of Gas Operations for NIPSCO. "Especially at a time when we're relying on important utilities to connect us and keep us safe at home, calling 811 or visiting 811now.com is really the only way to know which utilities are buried in your area so that you dig safely."

The depth of utility lines can vary for a number of reasons, such as erosion, previous digging projects and uneven surfaces. Utility lines need to be properly marked because even when digging only a few inches or digging in a location that's previously been marked, the risk of striking an underground utility line still exists. Visit Indiana811.com for more information about 811 and safe digging practices.

**About NIPSCO:** *Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), with headquarters in Merrillville, Indiana, has proudly served the energy needs of northern Indiana for more than 100 years. As Indiana's largest natural gas distribution company and the second-largest electric distribution company, NIPSCO serves approximately 835,000 natural gas and 473,000 electric customers across 32 counties. NIPSCO is part of NiSource's (NYSE: NI) seven regulated utility companies. NiSource is one of the largest fully regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 4 million natural gas and electric customers through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. More information about NIPSCO and NiSource is available at NIPSCO.com and NiSource.com.*

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