



Media Contacts:

Bob McKeon 402-935-4887

Janaan Harp 402-680-8928

Black Hills Media Line 866-243-9002

BLACK HILLS ENERGY ADVISES IOWANS TO CALL 811 BEFORE DIGGING

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa, April 10, 2009 – As the weather warms and the gardening and construction season begins, Black Hills Energy is reminding all customers and contractors to call 811 for a utility line locate before digging.

“Safety is a top priority for Black Hills Energy,” said Tracy Peterson, vice president of Iowa natural gas operations for Black Hills Energy. “We encourage homeowners and companies to call 811 prior to starting an outdoor digging project so they can avoid the possibility of serious or fatal injury and the expensive cost of repairing natural gas service lines.”

According to Common Ground Alliance, more than 256,000 underground utility lines are struck each year in the U.S., and 35 percent of all U.S. damages from digging result from not calling for underground utility line locates before digging.

This is why April has been designated as National Safe Digging Month. Black Hills Energy advises that anyone who plans to plant a garden or a tree, put in a fence or start any project where the soil is being disturbed to first call 811 so underground utility lines can be marked.

Iowa One Call is the state’s utility line locating service that is provided free of charge by Black Hills Energy and other participating utilities in Iowa. Residents need to call at least two business days, but not more than 10 business days, before their project begins. The phone numbers are 811 or 800-292-8989 statewide in Iowa.

Once a request is received, Iowa One Call notifies all affected utilities. Personnel are then sent to mark the location of any underground lines and facilities, including water, sewer, storm sewer, natural gas, electric and cable TV. The approximate location of each line within a digging site is color coded with spray paint or flags by a professional locator.

Besides having to pay for costly repairs if underground facilities are damaged, an individual or company could be fined up to \$10,000 for damages caused to the underground infrastructure and that amount can increase each day the service interruption persists, up to a maximum of \$500,000.

“Calling 811 before any excavation is an important step, even if all you’re doing is a small amount of landscaping in your backyard,” said Peterson. “Ensure the safety of your family and neighbors and call 811 before you dig. It’s free, it’s easy and it’s the law.”

Additional customer resources include Web sites for Common Ground Alliance (www.commongroundalliance.com), the 811 number (www.call811.com) and Iowa One Call (www.iowaonecall.com).

Common Ground Alliance represents a continuation of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s common ground study that highlighted the need for one organization to continuously update best practices among the growing underground utility industry. It was formed in 2000 to prevent damage to underground utility infrastructure and ensure public safety and environmental protection.

The 811 number is a new, federally mandated national number created to protect the public from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. As a safety reminder to its customers, Black Hills Energy service vehicles now feature the 811 number on them.

Black Hills Energy, a division of Black Hills Corp. (NYSE: BKH), serves 149,500 natural gas customers in 130 Iowa communities. Black Hills Corp. — a diversified energy company with a tradition of exemplary service and a vision to be the energy partner of choice — is based in Rapid City, S.D., with corporate offices in Golden, Colo., and Omaha, Neb. The company serves 759,000 utility customers in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. The company’s non-regulated businesses generate wholesale electricity, produce natural gas, oil and coal, and market energy. More information is available at www.blackhillsenergy.com.

