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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*** **Media Advisory – Tuesday, May 1, 2012** ***

U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Urges Homeowners, Excavators to Avoid a ‘Grimm’ Situation in New ‘Call 811 Before You Dig’ Public Service Announcement

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood will join safety advocates and business leaders at a press conference on Tuesday, May 1, 2012, to urge the public to avoid preventable pipeline accidents by calling 811 before they dig. The national 811 toll-free telephone number should be used by anyone prior to digging so that underground pipelines and other utilities can be marked and thus avoided during construction, landscaping and other excavation projects. In recognition of the five-year anniversary of the Call 811 program, LaHood will unveil national TV and radio public service announcements reminding the public to “Avoid a Grimm Situation – Call 811 Before You Dig” and recognize advocates and retailers for their efforts to raise awareness of the program.

Together with the [Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration](#), USDOT is engaging in a national education campaign promoting safe digging practices to prevent injuries and deaths associated with incidents from pipelines. There are **2.5 million miles of pipeline** in our nation, and one-third of all pipeline accidents are caused by someone digging and hitting a pipeline by mistake, which can be fatal.

WHO: USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood
PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman
Candace Schnoor, John Deere
Vic Weston, Common Ground Alliance chairman and Tri-State Boring president

WHAT: Press conference to unveil new “call before you dig” public service announcement

WHEN: Tuesday, May 1, 2:30 to 3 p.m. ET

WHERE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Media Center
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE Washington D.C., 20590

Call 811 Background

Excavation is the number one cause of serious pipeline accidents, and one-third of all pipeline accidents are **caused by someone digging and hitting a pipeline by mistake**. These mistakes can be fatal, or cause significant service outages. PHMSA invests considerable resources in helping communities understand how to practice effective pipeline damage prevention techniques to minimize the possibility of associated injuries.

Calling before you dig is the first rule to remember when digging, no matter what the job is. The law requires you to phone the "One-Call" center at 8-1-1 at least two days prior to conducting any form of digging activity. This notification provides utility operators the sufficient amount of time needed to mark any underground utilities located in the area and dramatically reduces the possibility of personal injury.

For more information, visit the PHMSA website at: <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/DamagePrevention.htm>
For more information on calling 811 before you dig, visit: <http://www.call811.com>