



## *Media Release*

For Immediate Release

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### **Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call's Safety Patrol Program Making Successful Strides in Spreading Safety Message**

Sask 1st Call's proactive Safety Patrol Program, introduced in May 2014, is making important progress in efforts to reduce damage to the Province's vital underground infrastructure.

Collectively, the three Crowns - SaskEnergy, SaskTel and SaskPower - have seen a line hit reduction of over 25 per cent in the first six months of 2014 compared to the same time period in 2013.

"The patrollers take their role very seriously and are working hard to fulfill their overall goal of contributing to damage reduction efforts," said Barb Tchozewski, Manager of Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call. "Although we're only one-third through the construction season, and have some busy months still to come, these numbers are encouraging. Fewer contacts with underground infrastructure is a significant achievement – every prevented line contact could mean one less incident that causes a serious injury, or even a fatality, for a contractor or homeowner."

Earlier this year, the three utility Crowns identified a rising trend in facility damage caused by excavation work in new urban neighbourhoods. Homeowners and contractors have been contacting buried utility lines during digging activities that surround new home construction, such as basement excavation, fence and deck installation, landscaping, and driveway paving.

To help reverse this trend, the Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call Safety Patrol Program was initiated to help support the Crowns' existing safety awareness campaigns and initiatives. Safety Patrols are actively checking in with homeowners and contractors' working in newer communities within Saskatoon and Regina areas to see if they have contacted Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call and had line locates completed before digging projects begin.

"The Patrollers are utilizing every opportunity to educate the public on the importance of line locates, as well as safe digging practices," said Daryl Posehn, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance. "I'm really pleased the Safety Patrol's marked Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call vehicles are a common sight in their patrol neighbourhoods and a reminder of the critical safe digging message."

Safety Patrols have also been visiting contractor offices and businesses that rent out excavation equipment to encourage them to pass along safety messages to their employees and customers. Patrollers are encouraged by the positive feedback they have received from homeowners, business owners and contractors who have taken the time to meet with them.

The Safety Patrols will continue targeting new neighbourhoods in Saskatoon and Regina where a high concentration of construction activity is occurring. In Saskatoon, this includes Rosewood, Stonebridge,

Hampton Village, Evergreen, Willowgrove, and the cities of Warman and Martensville. For Regina, the patrols will be seen in Harbour Landing, The Creeks, Greens on Gardiner, Maple Ridge, Lakeridge, Skyview, Hawkstone, Edgewater, Kensington Greens and the communities of Pilot Butte, Balgonie, White City/Emerald Park and the City of Moose Jaw.

Patrols will be active in these areas until October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014, when the major construction season ends.

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The **SCGA** is a member-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring worker and public safety, environmental protection and the integrity of services by promoting effective damage prevention practices in connection with underground infrastructure activities. For more information, please go to [www.scga.ca](http://www.scga.ca)

**Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call** is a non-profit “**Call Before You Dig**” underground facility location service for contractors and homeowners who are planning to dig or excavate. Subscriber companies require two full working days’ notice to locate the underground facilities at the project site, allowing work to continue without impacting buried infrastructure, or disrupting service to customers. Sask. 1<sup>st</sup> Call has close to 60 members (including SaskEnergy/TransGas, SaskPower and SaskTel) and represents more than 400,000 kilometres of buried infrastructure across Saskatchewan. For more information, please go to [www.sask1stcall.com](http://www.sask1stcall.com)