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NTSB ACTING CHAIRMAN URGES VIGILANCE IN PREVENTING
EXCAVATION RELATED PIPELINE ACCIDENTS

WASHINGTON, DC - National Transportation Safety Board Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker today challenged excavators and pipeline safety regulators to build on the progress already made in decreasing the number of pipeline and gas line excavation related accidents, and to be vigilant about safety to lower the accident rate further.

Addressing the Damage Prevention Conference in Las Vegas today, an event focused on reducing accidents involving buried pipelines, gas lines and cables, Rosenker called on every organization involved in excavation activities to make safe practices and procedures a top priority. "You cannot be complacent. You cannot wait for others to act. You must be proactive and you must make safety first," he said.

Rosenker also cited the role of pipeline safety agencies, encouraging their representatives to "continuously examine how you can motivate the industry to follow effective excavation damage prevention programs."

Applying the recent improvements in excavation practices, such as 811, the National Call-Before-You-Dig Number, and the growing use of GPS systems to more accurately identify the precise locations of underground pipelines, Rosenker cautioned that three safety issues "stubbornly persist" from year to year. They are: inadequate one-call notification practices, even with 811; inadequate excavation practices; and failure to promptly notify authorities after a pipeline is damaged.

Rosenker called on the Department of Transportation to make it very clear to anyone doing excavation work that "it is inexcusable to damage a pipeline and not report the damage."

The full text of Chairman Rosenker's speech is available at <http://www.nts.gov/Speeches/rosenker/mvr081210.html>

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