

Call before you dig to be safe

Now that the weather is changing, homeowners and contractors are planning fall planting and digging projects. Before the rains begin, soils are still dry, so, before you start recklessly attacking your project with a pickaxe or rented power equipment, take a minute to consider the hazards that lie beneath the ground.

"Homeowners engaging in ambitious trenching, digging, or planting projects are the most vulnerable to dig in accidents," said Kelly Mulholland, chair of Oregon Utility Notification Center's (OUNC) publicity and education committee. Trenching, digging, or planting can cause damage to an underground facility and, if you don't know where utilities are located, you are exposing yourself and others to unnecessary health and financial risks.

Accidental contact with underground facilities could disrupt electricity, gas, telephones, 9-1-1 calls, water, and other vital services. Even worse, contact with these lines can cause serious injury or even death.

In addition to being required by law, it's good insurance to learn where utilities are before starting your project. And, as a homeowner, wouldn't it be nice to know where those lines are buried?

Call the OUNC 24-hour toll free number at 1-800-332-2344. This free service will notify utilities to mark their facilities with color-coded paint. For additional information, go to www.DigSafelyOregon.com.

By Oregon law, everyone planning any type of excavation project must call the toll free number and wait two business days for the lines to be marked. Failure to make the call subjects the excavator – who can be either a homeowner or contractor – to liability for accidents, as well as fines.



Why political campaigns drive us all nuts!

(Or, just how stupid do some candidates think we are?)

“Vote for me and I’ll protect you from special interests.” Don’t you love that one? Every point of view deserves to be heard and understood. We don’t need elected officials to protect us. We need elected officials who will make decisions based on open discussion and based on law, not on influence.

“Vote for me and I will work to create jobs.” And just exactly how does the candidate propose to do that? Apparently, some candidates think they can get ‘all parties’ to sit around a huge table and somehow jobs are created. The fact is that the best thing government can do to enhance our local economy is to make sure the ground rules are clear and up to date and then get out of the way.

“Vote for me and I will increase citizen involvement.” How? Subpoena them? Most folks are busy raising families, trying to make ends meet and being good, hardworking citizens. Making sure that the community is fully informed *before* decisions are made and making sure that people have an adequate opportunity to express themselves is the best way to ensure citizen involvement and the best way to avoid making really stupid decisions!

“Vote for me because I will have an open door’ policy.” Is this candidate saying that someone actually has a ‘closed door’ policy? When someone files for any public office, that person should know that the job requires being available and being responsive to every citizen. If someone doesn’t want to be bothered by the public, they should apply for some other job.

“Vote for me and I will protect your right to do whatever you want on your private property.” Unless, of course, someone wants to locate an adult bookstore next to a daycare center! Oregon’s land use system is intended to balance the rights of the individual landowner with the rights and expectations of the community. Land use law is State law, not County law. Maybe some county commission candidates should be running for the State Legislature.

“Vote for me and I’ll fix our roads.” Columbia County has many more miles of roads than it has funds to maintain them, yet some candidates either believe they alone know how to stretch those limited dollars beyond belief or maybe they just want higher taxes.

Colleen DeShazer is the candidate for Columbia County Commissioner who understands the job and she will not insult the intelligence of the people she hopes to serve.

Elect Colleen DeShazer

No promises – Just an Honest, Hardworking
County Commissioner

Paid by the Committee to Elect Colleen DeShazer