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Kentucky Derby Champion Jockey Victor Espinoza to Share ‘Call 811’ Safety Message at 140th Preakness Stakes this Saturday

Espinoza looks to win first two legs of Triple Crown for second consecutive year while wearing utility safety message on his boots, saddle pad and pre-/post-race hat

WASHINGTON (May 14, 2015) – [Common Ground Alliance](#) (CGA), the organization dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and the safety of people who dig near them, today announced that more than 30 of its member organizations will continue their sponsorship of 2015 Kentucky Derby champion jockey Victor Espinoza at this Saturday’s 140th running of the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore, Md.

Espinoza will wear the [811 message](#) – which promotes the national “call before you dig” phone number – on his saddle pad and his boots at Pimlico. He will also continue to wear his blue 811 hat in all media interviews. The 811 service helps homeowners and professionals who plan to dig notify multiple utility companies with one phone call.

Everyone who calls 811 a few days before digging is connected to a local one call notification center that will take the caller’s information and communicate it to local utility companies. Professional utility locating technicians will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint or flags. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities increases the likelihood of an unintentional damage, which can cause serious injuries, service disruptions and repair costs. According to CGA data, nearly half of American homeowners who plan to dig this year will not call 811 beforehand, putting themselves and their communities at risk. A buried utility is damaged every six minutes because someone decided to dig without calling 811, according to CGA member data.

“Victor’s continued success on the track has led to increased exposure for the 811 message during the past two years,” said Bob Kipp, Common Ground Alliance President. “As he seeks to win the first two legs of the Triple Crown for the second straight year, Victor will be featured frequently in media coverage surrounding the Preakness Stakes this weekend, which is good for public safety.”

Four of the six busiest days for total traffic to Call811.com have occurred on the dates of the past four Triple Crown races, when Espinoza was wearing the 811 logo, according to Google Analytics.

Sponsors including [Alabama 811](#), [Atmos Energy](#), [Avista](#), [Baltimore Gas & Electric \(BGE\)](#), [Colorado 811](#), [ConEd](#), [Dig Alert \(Underground Service Alert of Southern California\)](#), [Dig Safe System](#), [Dig Safely New York](#), [Duke Energy](#), [Enbridge](#), [Enterprise Products](#), [Georgia 811](#), [Iowa Pipeline Association](#), [Kentucky 811](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Magellan Midstream Partners](#), [Miss Utility of Maryland/D.C.](#), [Montana 811](#), [Nebraska Pipeline Association](#), [New York 811](#), [North Carolina 811](#), [One Call Concepts](#), [Oklahoma 811](#), [Ohio Utilities Protection Service](#), [Pacific Gas and Electric](#), [Pennsylvania 811](#), [PPL Interstate Energy Company](#), [Premier Utility Services](#), [Rhino Marking and Protection Systems](#), [Shell](#), [SoCalGas \(Southern California Gas Company\)](#), [Sunoco Logistics](#), [Sunshine 811](#), [Texas811](#), [UGI Utilities](#), [USA North 811](#) and [Virginia 811](#) have made it possible for 811 to sponsor jockey [Victor Espinoza](#) at the Preakness Stakes once again this year.

CGA members partnered to sponsor Espinoza for all three Triple Crown races in 2014, including wins at the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness Stakes, and are sponsoring him for 600 other races throughout 2015.

“This large platform to promote the 811 service is only possible because of our members’ support,” said Kipp. “The three Triple Crown races are more than just sporting events; they are signature American cultural events.”

Pre-race Preakness Stakes coverage begins Saturday at 2:30 p.m. EDT on NBC Sports Network, with NBC picking up the coverage at 4:30 p.m. and continuing through the post-race ceremony.

About CGA

CGA is a member-driven association of 1,700 individuals, organizations and sponsors in every facet of the underground utility industry. Established in 2000, CGA is committed to saving lives and preventing damage to underground infrastructure by promoting effective damage prevention practices. CGA has established itself as the leading organization in an effort to reduce damages to underground facilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. For more information, visit CGA on the web at www.commongroundalliance.com.

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