**Pitching Media to Cover Local Locate Rodeo Participants**

**Background**

Texas811 will host the International Utility Locate Rodeo Oct. 11-13, 2018. This competition tests the skills of underground utility locate technicians.

Participants compete in locating one type of facility — gas, power, telecom or water — and the winner is determined based on a variety of skill tests. The International Utility Locate Rodeo is the preeminent underground utility location competition for locate technicians from the United States and Canada.

**Execution**

In order to successfully achieve media coverage of your local participants in the locate rodeo there are several key steps that must be completed:

* **Identify Local Participants** – Contact the International Utility Locate Rodeo’s JimBob Sims at jimbobsims@texas811.org, who will provide you with a list of all local participants for the 2018 Locate Rodeo and their contact information.

* **Create a Media List** –A local employee’s participation in the Locate Rodeo should be pitched to local television and print news outlets. Identify the main print and local television stations in that demographic area, and make a list of key email addresses and phone numbers of editors and community reporters at the print outlets, and general news desk email addresses for the local TV stations. This information can be found on each outlet’s website, or by calling the outlet and talking to the operator.
* **Prepare Media Packet** – Customize the media advisory, press release and email pitch to be specific to the local locators who are competing in the rodeo.
* **Distribute to Media** – Before the competition, email the advisory and email pitch to the appropriate media contacts from your list. Follow that email with a phone call either the next day or two days later. After the competition, follow up with your media contact by sending the post-competition press release announcing the winners if someone in your area has placed.
* **Schedule Interviews for Interested Media** – If a media contact expresses interest in the story you pitched, coordinate a time when there can either be a phone interview between the competitor and the reporter, or schedule a time that the reporter can come out to the competitor’s jobsite to see him/her in action.

**Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Date** |  **Task** |
| September  | Obtain list of 2018 competitors from International Utility Locate Rodeo  |
| Early October | Prepare media packet for distribution |
| Two weeks prior to competition | Email media advisory and pitch to appropriate local media contacts  |
| Two days after email  | Make follow up emails with a phone call to media contact  |
| Monday after competition | Email post-competition press release to media contacts if local participant placed |

**Locate Rodeo Pitch Email**

Hi XXX,

[Individuals name] from [company name] will be competing at this year's Annual International Utility Locate Rodeo at XXX on XXX. This event tests the skills of professionals who identify and mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with paint and/or flags so the lines are not struck by people who are digging near them.

[Individual's first name] has an extraordinary job that often goes unrecognized, despite the fact that his/her work goes a long way to protect our safety and ensure the utilities we rely on for modern living go uninterrupted.

With the timely hook of him/her participating in this international competition, would you be interested in sharing his/her story? I'd be happy to put you in touch with [Individual's first name] or have you come out and see him/her in action here in the {area name} area.

Below, please find a media advisory which will provide you more information on the event, and to learn more about the Locate Rodeo, please visit the website.

Thanks in advance for your time and consideration for sharing this news with your readers. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

XXX

**Locate Rodeo media advisory**

#### [Insert Company Logo]

**Media Contact:**

[NAME]

[PHONE NUMBER]

[EMAIL ADDRESS]

**{City/Town Name} Resident to Participate in Annual International Utility Locate Rodeo**

*Top utility locate technicians from the United States and Canada to compete head-to-head*

**WHAT**: XXX from XXX will participate in the Annual International Utility Locate Rodeo on the XXX in XXX.

This competition tests the skills of underground utility locate technicians, professionals who locate and mark the approximate location of underground utilities with paint and flags to protect the safety of professional excavators, homeowners who dig on their own property and entire communities.

Participants compete in locating one type of facility — gas, power, telecom or water — and the winner is determined based on a variety of skill tests. The International Utility Locate Rodeo is the preeminent underground utility location competition for locate technicians from the United States and Canada.

Everyone who plans to dig should call 811 {insert notification period} before digging to inform their local one-call notification center, which is known as {Insert participant’s one-call center name} in {Insert participant’s state name}. The call is free and is the first step that those who intend to dig must take to have a locating technician mark their property.

WHEN: XXX

TIME: XXX

**WHERE: XXX**

# # #

**NEWS RELEASE ANNOUNCING rodeo winners**

#### [Insert Company Logo]

**Media Contact:**

[NAME]

[PHONE NUMBER]

[EMAIL ADDRESS]

[CITY/TOWN NAME] RESIDENT AMONG WINNERS AT ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL UTILITY LOCATE RODEO

**[CITY], Texas (DATE)** – The International Utility Locate Rodeo today announced the winners of its annual competition, which took place Oct. 11-13 at LOCATION. Among the winners was/were [INSERT LOCAL WINNERS].

The Locate Rodeo is a competition held each year for utility locate technicians to join together in competition for the recognition in their utility field as the most accurate locate technician. Locate technicians locate, identify and mark all underground utility lines with colored paint or flags to help prevent any party who is digging from damaging these lines and compromising the safety of themselves and the surrounding area.

Everyone who plans to dig should call 811 [Insert notification period] before digging to inform their local one-call notification center, which is known as {Insert participant’s one-call center name} in {Insert participant’s state name}. The call is free and is the first step of those who intend to dig must take to have a locating technician mark their property.

The winners of the competition were chosen based on their ability to accurately mark the location of underground utility lines in a timely manner. The competition was divided by utility type: gas, power, telecommunication and water. Within each division, skills were put to the test at three different event sites. The scores from all three event sites were then used to determine the overall winner of each division.

 “Locate technicians perform extraordinary work to protect our communities, but their work often goes unnoticed,” said [stakeholder spokesperson]. “This rodeo is a great way to honor the men and women who locate underground utilities and to showcase to the world their hard work to keep residents safe.”

For more information about the International Utility Locate Rodeo, please visit [www.locaterodeo.com](http://www.locaterodeo.com).

See attachment for list of winners (will be provided by IULR).

 *# # #*