

International Locate Rodeo 2015

The 14th Annual International Locate Rodeo (Locate Rodeo) was held last weekend on the campus of the University of West Georgia. The Locate Rodeo was hosted by Georgia 811 and the National Utility Locate Contractors Association (NULCA). The Locate Rodeo is described as “The Olympics of the Locate Industry”. The event was started by Georgia 811 and is designed to celebrate the art and science behind the craft of underground utility locating.

This year there were 81 competitors from the USA and Canada and they represented 37 different companies. This is a large event that requires a lot of volunteers to run it. There were 110+ volunteers from 29 different states and they represented 13 different companies. Tennessee 811 has sent volunteers every year since the Rodeo started.

There are 3 divisions of locates – power, gas and water – plus the, “Locate from Hell” (LFH) event.


This year Tennessee was represented by Tommy Toombs, from USIC, who competed in the Water Division, Jason Brooks, from JEA (Jackson Energy Authority), who competed in the Power Division, Steven Ballentine, from JEA, who competed in the Telecom Division, and Brock (BJ) Wilson, from JEA, who competed in the Gas Division. Steven Ballentine from JEA won the Telecom Event 3 using a Metrotech/Vivax locator.

The competitors from JEA had nothing but good things to say about the rodeo. It was their first year and they learned a lot. Jason Brooks said, “It was a lot more challenging than I expected. It really tests your accuracy as well as your endurance.” They are already making plans to compete in the 2016 rodeo in Texas. They will use the time until rodeo to get their strategy together and look at what they could improve on from this year’s rodeo. Their trip to the rodeo was sponsored by JEA.

Tommy Toombs of USIC competed in the Water Division. His trip to the locate rodeo was sponsored by Matt Manning of McLaughlin. Tommy has been using a McLaughlin locator at USIC. This was his 3rd trip to the Locate Rodeo (he competed in 2009 in the telecom division, 2014 in the water division) and it appears that saying “3rd time’s the charm” has some merit to it. Tommy took 1st Place in Water Event 1, 1st Place in Water Event 2 and 1st Place in Water Event 3, which of course leads to – 1st Place in the Water Division. He said he felt good about his 3 events – he was even the first competitor at the rodeo to finish. Once they called his name as winner for the first 2 events, he thought he might have a chance at Division winner. Tommy really liked the campus of Western Georgia University and felt the water locates this year were more challenging than he had encountered in his two previous trips to rodeo. He was very complimentary of Georgia 811 as hosts and all the volunteers at the event.

Georgia 811 has handed over the reins for the 2016 International Locate Rodeo to Texas 811. After 14 years, Georgia has really run out of event sites. Georgia 811 started the event and has planned and worked hard to provide an outstanding experience for both the competitors and the volunteers every year. They have worked hard for 14 years to provide a great experience for the locators and to show appreciation for all they do every day. Texas 811 has big shoes to fill, but we know they will hold a great event – no worries there.

**Water Division Winner
1st Place**



**Tommy Toombs
USIC**

**\$1000 Rodeo Winnings
\$100 Krylon Winnings | \$100 USIC Winnings**

2015 | www.LocateRodeo.com

Telecom Event #3



**Metrotech/Vivax
Steven Ballentine
Jackson Energy
Authority**

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JEA CONTESTANTS from left to right: Brock (BJ) Wilson, Jason Brooks, Steven Ballantine