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Shell celebrates National 811 Day

By KRISTINA SALAZAR

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In recognition of National 811 Day, Shell Pipeline Company LP in Pasadena held a dedication ceremony to the Common Ground Alliance for tank number TP-204 which contained the logo for 811 in an effort to support the "Call Before You Dig" campaign.

Employees of the company as well as state and city leaders showed up to support the effort.

"Pipelines are everywhere (and) damage prevention is number one as far as I'm concerned on the list," said Mary Mujica, president of Shell Pipeline Company LP. "If you dig and don't know what's below, you're going to hit something."

Mujica further explained that the safety aspect is important due to the fact that there have been fatalities during this year while digging around pipelines.

"Each year, more than 170,000 underground utility lines are unintentionally damaged," Mujica said.

State Rep. Ken Legler then expressed his highest regards to the campaign and what it stands for.

"It's a private industry (that's) really taking the lead on this and private industry is what makes our country grow, makes our country succeed," Legler said. "You're giving the cause and you're making sure the 811 gets out and I appreciate that, and I know the constituents in my district appreciate that, and the state of Texas appreciates that, and of course the United States appreciates that."

After Legler spoke, it was then that Bob Kipp, president of the Common Ground Alliance, began his speech by first explaining how the alliance began.

Kipp explained that in 1998, incidences occurred which caused a group to be formed containing experts who devised a common ground study of best practices being followed.

"It incorporated the voices of oil, gas, gas distribution, telecom and of course the contractors (like) road builders, utility builders, locators, the railroads were in there, state governments, firemen, etc.," Kipp said.

Kipp further explained that they do more than just 811. They develop practices as well, which are becoming law in some states or in the case of Georgia, all of the practices have become regulation.

"The key thing about our practices is that each and every word in those practices has to be agreed to by every group," Kipp said. "It is a real consensus making decision process. If a contractor doesn't like the word, not going in. Everybody's got to agree to every word."

Regarding the 811 campaign, Kipp explained the vast importance the training plays in avoiding injury.

"Is it working? Mary (Mujica) said 170,000 damages," Kipp said. "That's going to be in our report being distributed next week. I've already given the Senate a heads up on it. We started with 450,000 damages in 2004. 450,000 to 170,000, you tell me if it's working."

Kipp also explained that there are only eight numbers available and Texas has one of them. In fact, Kipp noted that the Texas Excavation Safety System changed its name to Texas 811 to go with the campaign effort which has clicked with other states as well.

"811 has now become the team logo," Kipp said. "It's our Yankees. More and more of the team is rallying around the number."

811 is the national number designated by the Federal Communications Commission to help protect do-it-yourselfers, landscapers and contractors from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects both large and small.

The media sheet handed out during the ceremony states:

Call 811 at least 48 hours prior to digging and the process of the getting underground utility lines marked for free will follow.

When calling 811 from anywhere in the country, a representative from the appropriate local one call center will answer the call to find out the location and descriptions of the digging site and will notify affected utility companies, who will then send a professional locator to identify and mark the approximate location of lines within a few days of the call.

Once underground lines have been marked, callers will know the approximate location of utility lines and can dig safely.

For more information about 811, visit www.call811.com. For more information about the Common Ground Alliance, visit www.commongroundalliance.com.



In recognition of National 811 Day, Shell Pipeline President Mary Mujica dedicated Tank Number TP-205 to Bob Kipp, President of Common Ground Alliance.



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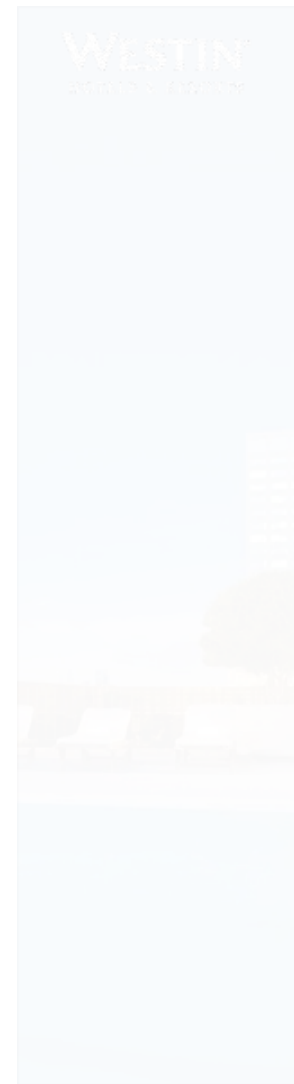


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