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20th Anniversary of State 'Roadeo' Training Competition Showcases Highway Equipment Operators Safety and Skills

14 winners advance to regional competition

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 30, 2026) – State highway equipment operators put their experience and training on display while competing in the state's annual 'Roadeo' designed to strengthen safety and precision skills used to maintain Kentucky infrastructure. The training event, held June 24-25 at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, included workshops and hands-on events for crews. Fourteen team members will represent Kentucky at the Southeastern Regional Event, which features other state transportation agencies.

Now in its 20th year, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Equipment Operators' Safety & Training Conference Roadeo brings together Department of Highways district heavy equipment operators from all 12 highway districts to attend training, safety demonstrations, and showcase skills needed to maintain, clear, and improve Kentucky roadways.

"Our dedicated crews face a range of hazards in the line of duty from operating chainsaws to clearing downed trees, to pushing snow and paving potholes in extreme weather," said KYTC Secretary Rebecca Goodman. "Safe operators mean a safer work environment for everyone. Developing safe skills to better serve Kentuckians and teaching prevention techniques to keep our crews safe make this worthwhile."

Operators competed in seven courses testing accuracy, agility, and time while operating heavy equipment, including graders, backhoes, single- and tandem-axle dump trucks, tractors with mowers, skid steers, and tractor trucks with lowboy trailers.

Participants qualified for the state Rodeo by finishing either first or second in district-level competitions featuring seven obstacle-course exercises. The top two finishers in each event will now advance to the southeastern regional competition featuring winners from other states to be hosted by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The team from District 9, in Flemingsburg, earned first place with 356 points. The team from District 10, in Jackson, finished second with 299 points. The team from District 7, in Lexington, finished third with 256 points.

Individual finishers by course:

Tractor Truck with Lowboy Trailer

- 1st Place – Charlie Barnes, Highway District 7
- 2nd Place – Matt Kirby, Highway District 10
- 3rd Place – John Waymire, Highway District 9

Tandem Axle Dump Truck

- 1st Place – Josh Howard, Highway District 10
- 2nd Place – Stephen Daughtery, Highway District 4
- 3rd Place – Todd Myers, Highway District 9

Single Axle Dump Truck

- 1st Place – Josh Garmon, Highway District 4
- 2nd Place – Jon Sanders, Highway District 3
- 3rd Place – Cortney Vanover, Highway District 8

Tractor with Mower

- 1st Place – Adam Matherly, Highway District 8
- 2nd Place – John Waymire, Highway District 9
- 3rd Place – Paul Gripshover, Highway District 3

Backhoe

- 1st Place – Jeremiah Moyers, Highway District 9
- 2nd Place – Joe Sharp, Highway District 8
- 3rd Place – Cortney Vanover, Highway District 8

Motor Grader

- 1st Place – David Webster, Highway District 6
- 2nd Place – Jacob Prater, Highway District 12
- 3rd Place – Tyler Story, Highway District 9

Skid Steer

- 1st Place – Mitchell Tyra, Highway District 10

2nd Place – Nicholas Eichmann, Highway District 6
3rd Place – Matthew Stargle, Highway District 4

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Editor's note: Click [HERE](#) to view photos from the two-day event.

