



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Transportation Crew Members Saddle Up to Compete in Regional “Rodeo”
Safety Competition**

12 highway equipment operators from annual statewide safety training and heavy equipment skills competition to advance to regional

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 28, 2022) – Twelve Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) equipment operators will advance to represent Kentucky at the Southeastern Regional Equipment Operator’s Safety and Training Conference after earning high marks in the state-level competition hosted last Tuesday and Wednesday in Lexington.

The annual State Equipment Operators’ Safety and Training Conference, otherwise known as the Statewide Equipment Rodeo, is a respected event featuring the top two performers from six obstacle course competitions. The contestants were either the first or second-place winner in the district competition held in each of KYTC’s Department of Highways districts.

“Our crews operate heavy equipment that requires precision skills to perform critical maintenance activities, like plowing snow or hauling materials,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “The 16th annual event is an important safety training exercise to properly handle potentially hazardous equipment and machinery, and it’s an impressive showcase of our front-line crews’ mastery of the trade.”

Operators competed in six courses testing accuracy, agility and speed while operating heavy equipment like graders, backhoes, snow plows, tractors, and lowboys. During the backhoe competition, operators’ pick up five golf balls, one at a time, from a 4-by-8 foot box of sand with a spoon-like attachment on the backhoe bucket and drop them in narrow cylinders with openings as small as three inches.

The regional competition will be held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in September 2022. First and second place winners from each event are invited to compete.

State Competition Courses and Winners:

Tractor Truck with Lowboy Trailer

1st Place- Mathew Kirby, Highway District 10
2nd Place- Lewis Barrett, Highway District 7
3rd Place- Charlie Barnes, Highway District 10

Tandem Axle Dump Truck

1st Place- Darren Jackson, Highway District 7
2nd Place- Dustin Phillips, Highway District 4
3rd Place- Joshua Madden, Highway District 11

Single Axle Dump Truck

1st Place- Edward Howard, Highway District 2
2nd Place- Stanley Heisle, Highway District 7
3rd Place- Frederick Hylton, Highway District 10

Tractor with Mower

1st Place- Travis Padgett, Highway District 9
2nd Place- Adam Matherly, Highway District 8
3rd Place- Todd Plank, Highway District 9

Backhoe

1st Place- Joe Sharp, Highway District 8
2nd Place- Jeremiah Meyers, Highway District 9
3rd Place- Barry Johnson, Highway District 8

Motor Grader

1st Place- Adam Matherly, Highway District 8
2nd Place- Brandon Slaven, Highway District 8
3rd Place- Hunter Sneed, Highway District 8

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Editor's Note: Below is a link to b-roll footage of operators competing in obstacle course events at the statewide rodeo at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. <https://youtu.be/hhGNxapug6w>

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