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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sheila O’Connor | Vice President**

**402-476-8504**

**Nebraska Truck Driving Championships winners announced**

*Nine drivers advance to National*

(Grand Island, Neb.) The Nebraska Trucking Association announces the winners of the 2017 Nebraska Truck Driving Championships, held June 2-3 in Grand Island, Neb.

This annual event offers Nebraska’s best professional truck drivers a chance to demonstrate knowledge, talent and skills in a competition highlighting what it takes to be a safe driver on today’s streets and highways. 102 drivers participated in this year’s championships in eleven classes. Additional awards were presented based upon scores in the four separate test areas: written examination, personal interview, pre-trip inspection and driving test. Team awards are also given to the company with three or more drivers competing with the highest overall score.

The 2017 overall **grand champion** is Ed Beins, ABF Freight System, Inc., Lincoln

The **professional excellence award** was presented to Brent Turek, FedEx Freight, Inc., Aurora

Nebraska Trucking and the championships have a long tradition of a positive working relationship with the Nebraska State Patrol Carrier Enforcement troopers. The **Buck Buchholtz Top Driver Award**, named in honor of Buchholtz, a former officer and long-time championship committee member, goes to the driver with the highest score on the driving course. The 2017 Darin Hardwick, Crete Carrier Corporation, Kansas City, MO

The **Kurt Everett Vehicle Condition Award**, named in honor of Everett, a long-time championship committee member, goes to the driver with the highest score on the pre-trip inspection. This year’s award is Kenny Dillion, Lyman-Richey Corporation, Omaha

The **Jerry Wessel Award**, named in honor of long-time committee member, is wared to drivers who have competed or volunteered at the Championships for at least five years and are rated on professionalism, industry knowledge and attitude. This year’s award winner is Tim Dean, Werner Enterprises, Omaha.

The **Rookie of the Year Award** is given to a first-time participant for having the highest overall score in all four parts of the competition. This year, Brent Turek of FedEx Freight, Inc. received the award.

The first-place winner in each of the first nine classes may advance to the American Trucking Association’s (ATA) National Truck Driving Championships in Orlando, Florida, while the mixer truck first place winner advances to the National Mixer Driver Championship.

Also, held during the championships was the Nebraska State Patrol Inspector Championships, consisting of a personal interview, a table top exercise and various hands-on inspections. Nebraska State Patrol Trooper Kris Hunzeker took first place honors and Trooper John Hadaway received runner-up honors. A 13-year veteran of the Nebraska State Patrol, Hunzeker is stationed in Nebraska City and assigned to the Carrier Enforcement Division. Hunzeker will now represent Nebraska in the North American Inspector Championships (NAIC) in Orlando, Florida, August 7–11, 2017.

**2017 NTDC class winners:**

Straight Class: Ed Beins ABF Freight System Inc. Lincoln

Shawn Harms FedEx Freight, Inc. Lincoln

Christina Gaines FedEx Express-Lincoln Lincoln

Three-axle class: Sam Wilson XPO Logistics Aurora

Larry Derr Werner Enterprises Omaha

Joe Busch ABF Freight System Inc. Omaha

Four-axle class: Terry Durham Werner Enterprises Omaha

John Poppen FedEx Freight, Inc. Grand Island

Jeff Tomlinson Fremont Contract Carriers, Inc. Fremont

Five-axle class: Tom Hopkins Walmart Transportation, LLC North Platte

Toby Kort FedEx Freight, Inc. Aurora

Kent Wood Fremont Contract Carriers, Inc. Fremont

Five-axle sleeper class: Darin Hardwick Crete Carrier Corporation Kansas City, MO

Eric Bauman Grand Island Express, Inc. Grand Island

Paul Smith ABF Freight System Inc. Omaha

Tank truck class: Ian Franck Hunt Transportation, Inc. Omaha

Jay Burmeister FedEx Freight, Inc. Grand Island

Phillip DeLauder Werner Enterprises Omaha

Flatbed class: John Fogo Red & White Market & Transfer, Inc. Hastings

Joey Martel ABF Freight System Inc. Omaha

Daryl Johnson YRC Freight Omaha

Twin-trailer class: Brent Turek FedEx Freight, Inc. Aurora

Rick Larch Grand Island Express, Inc. Grand Island

Tim Dean Werner Enterprises Omaha

Step van class: Adam Stroup FedEx Express-Omaha Omaha

Travis Minnick FedEx Express-Lincoln Lincoln

Chris Cherry FedEx Express-Lincoln Lincoln

Mixer truck class: Kenny Dillon Lyman-Richey Corporation Omaha

Dan Zeibig Beatrice Concrete Company, Inc. Crete

Tom Inzuaro Lyman-Richey Corporation Omaha

Truck and Pup: Bob Duff Lyman-Richey Corporation Omaha

Jennifer Kastens Lyman-Richey Corporation Omaha

Mitchell Helmuth Paulsen Inc. Lexington

Team winners: XPO Logistics Aurora

Walmart Transportation, LLC North Platte

Fremont Contract Carriers, Inc. Fremont

The Nebraska Trucking Association’s Safety Management Council organizes the championships.

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The Nebraska Trucking Association is the provider of effective information, services and advocacy to Nebraska trucking companies and affiliated businesses.