



## **NEBRASKA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION**

**nebtrucking.com | 402-476-8504**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**David Zelnio | Director Operations & Communications  
dave@nebtrucking.com**

### **History made at 2019 Nebraska Truck Driving Championships**

GRAND ISLAND – A rare win by a rookie and a champion performance by the competition’s only female driver brought the crowd to their feet at the 2019 Nebraska Truck Driving Championships (NTDC). The Grand Champion Award went to Eric Stein of Werner Enterprises. Christina Gaines of FedEx Express took first place in the straight truck competition.

The Nebraska Trucking Association organized the May 31-June 1 event at Fonner Park to highlight the best professional truck drivers in the state. Competitors demonstrated knowledge, talent and skills which focus on what it takes to be a safe driver on our streets and highways.

Eighty-five drivers participated in this year’s championships in nine classes of trucks. Drivers competed in pre-trip inspections, written exams, oral interviews with the Nebraska State Patrol and they finally tackled a challenging driving course. In one such challenge, drivers had to back a 65-foot long, 8--and-a-half-foot wide truck and trailer all the way through a 10-foot alley marked by barricades.

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 average score.

The 2019 overall grand champion was Eric Stein of Werner Enterprises. Stein also took home the Professional Excellence Award (highest written test) and the Rookie of the Year Award (first-time participant with the highest overall score in all four parts of the competition).

NTDC has a long positive working relationship with the Nebraska State Patrol Carrier Enforcement troopers. The Bucky Buchholtz Top Driver Award, named in honor of Buchholtz, a former Trooper and long-time championship committee member, went to the driver with the highest score on the driving course. This year’s honoree was Terry Durham from Werner Enterprises.

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 winner went to Kevin Zelasney of ABF Freight.

The Jerry Wessel Award, named in honor of a long-time committee member, is awarded 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 winner was Terry Durham from Werner Enterprises.

The first-place winner in each of the nine classes advances to the American Trucking Association's National Truck Driving Championships in Pittsburgh, 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 tabletop hazardous materials exercise and various hands-on inspections. Nebraska State Patrol Trooper Ben Schropfer of Nebraska City took first place honors and Trooper John Hadaway received runner-up honors. Schropfer will now represent Nebraska in the North American Inspector Championships, also held in conjunction with the National Truck Driving Championships

### **2019 NTDC class winners:**

#### Straight class:

- |    |                  |                      |
|----|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Christina Gaines | FedEx Express        |
| 2. | Shawn Harms      | FedEx Freight        |
| 3. | Steven Hays      | Grand Island Express |

#### Three-axle class:

- |    |               |                           |
|----|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Eric Stein    | Werner Enterprises        |
| 2. | Chris Corbett | Old Dominion Freight Line |
| 3. | James O'Neill | FedEx Freight             |

#### Four-axle class:

- |    |                |               |
|----|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | David Dye      | FedEx Freight |
| 2. | Kevin Zelasney | ABF Freight   |
| 3. | John Poppen    | FedEx Freight |

#### Five-axle class:

- |    |              |                           |
|----|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Thomas Rott  | Grand Island Express      |
| 2. | Tom Canning  | Old Dominion Freight Line |
| 3. | Robie Jensen | Fremont Contract Carriers |

#### Five-axle sleeper class:

- |    |                |                           |
|----|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Tim Dean       | Werner Enterprises        |
| 2. | Jeff Tomlinson | Fremont Contract Carriers |
| 3. | Jonathan Bhatt | Grand Island Express      |

#### Tank truck class:

- |    |              |                    |
|----|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Larry Derr   | Werner Enterprises |
| 2. | Scott Stroup | YRC Freight        |

3. Tim Anderson ABF Freight

Flatbed class:

1. Luke Beiermann Lyman-Richey Corp.  
2. Josh Howell Sunrise Express  
3. George Chaney FedEx Freight

Twin-trailer class:

1. Terry Durham Werner Enterprises  
2. David Auger FedEx Freight  
3. Rich Boyd Crete Carrier

Step van class:

1. Adam Stroup FedEx Express  
2. John W. Peyton FedEx Express  
3. Chris Cherry FedEx Express

Mixer truck class:

1. John Brezina Lyman-Richey Corporation  
2. Tommy Inzauro Lyman-Richey Corporation  
3. Steve Kelley Lyman-Richey Corporation

Team winners:

1. FedEx Freight  
2. Werner Enterprises  
3. ABF Freight

The Nebraska Trucking Association's Safety Management Council and the Nebraska Truck Driving Championship Committee organizes the championships.

The Nebraska Trucking Association (NTA) is the statewide trade association for commercial truck and bus operators, and affiliated businesses. NTA delivers the essential knowledge, contacts, services, political representation and partnerships that help our members continue to deliver the goods to Nebraska communities and throughout North America.

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