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42nd Annual Missouri Truck Driving Championships - 2009

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

TRUCKING INDUSTRY DISPLAYS THE BEST OF THE BEST IN ST. LOUIS

ST. LOUIS - On June 5 & 6, 2009, the Missouri Motor Carriers Association held the 42nd Annual Missouri Truck Driving Championships at the DoubleTree Westport in St. Louis, Missouri. The two day event evaluated nearly 125 drivers on their knowledge of the industry, first aid, safety and security, and required federal vehicle inspections. The participants were then interviewed by industry experts before entering a point-value-assessed driving skills course of six obstacles to be completed under actual everyday conditions.

In their respective classes, drivers tested their expertise in the driving skills they use daily. The competition challenged their knowledge of safety, equipment, and the industry, as well as their performance on a personal interview. The skills course tested drivers' ability to judge distances, maneuver tight spaces, reverse, park, and position their vehicle exactly over scales, before barriers or around curves. Nearly 400 on-lookers at the Awards Banquet Saturday evening saw **Joseph Mangiaracino** of Sullivan, Missouri, receive the prestigious "Grand Champion" title as Missouri's best of the best. Joe, a driver for FedEx Freight of St. Clair, Missouri, achieved this recognition by outscoring all other competitors in four elements of skill and knowledge.

Mangiaracino was also awarded the top driver in the Three Axle Class in the annual safe driving competition sponsored by the Association's Council of Safety Supervisors. He will be joined by eight other class winners as the Missouri Championship Team reporting to Pittsburgh, PA to compete against other state teams in the American Trucking Association's Truck Driving Championships on August 18 to 22, 2009. During the competition the Missouri Team will compete against 450 other professionals vying for selection as the nation's top professional truck drivers.

First, second and third place winners in all nine classes of competition as well as the top "Rookie" and the driver with the best Pre-Trip Inspection were honored at the Awards Banquet.

Winners and runners-up in the classes of competition are listed below with the driver's hometown, and Employer Company and location.

Straight Truck Class

1st – **Greg Kauffmann**, St. Peters, MO – *FedEx Express, Hazelwood, MO*

2nd – **Michael Millaway**, St. Louis, MO – *UPS Freight, St. Louis, MO*

3rd – **Jody Arnall**, Hartville, MO – *FedEx Freight, Cabool, MO*

Three Axle Class

1st – **Joseph Mangiaracino**, Sullivan, MO – *FedEx Freight, St. Clair, MO*

2nd – **Michael Meyer**, Fenton, MO – *FedEx Express, Hazelwood, MO*

3rd – **John Barney**, O'Fallon, MO – *FedEx Express, St. Louis, MO*

Four Axle Class

1st – **Albert Hockett**, St. James, MO – *Con-way Freight, Rolla, MO*

2nd – **Michael Gandee**, Cardington, OH – *Prime, Inc., Springfield, MO*

>3rd – **Rickey Barnett**, Cahokia, IL – *UPS Freight, St. Louis, MO*

Five Axle Van Class

1st – **Wyatt Hooper**, Republic, MO – Con-way Freight, *Marshfield, MO*

>2nd – **Robert Hussey**, St. James, MO – *Wal-Mart Transportation, St. James, MO*

3rd – **Paul Baumhoer**, Koeltztown, MO – *Wal-Mart Transportation, St. James, MO*

Flatbed Class

<1st – **Ronnie Martin**, Newcastle, OK – *Prime, Inc., Springfield, MO*

2nd – **Duane Grimme**, Satsuma, FL – *Prime, Inc., Springfield, MO*

3rd – **Arthur Taft**, St. James, MO – *Wal-Mart Transportation, St. James, MO*

Sleeper Berth Class

1st – **Billy Pritchett**, Midlothian, TX – Con-way Truckload, *Joplin, MO*

2nd – **Ricky Hopwood**, Donnellson, IL, – *Wal-Mart Transportation, St. James, MO*

3rd – **Bob Chilcoat**, Moore, OK – Con-way Truckload, *Joplin, MO*

Twin Trailers Class

1st – **Wayne Darnell**, Poplar Bluff, MO – *Con-way Freight, Poplar Bluff, MO*

2nd – **Larry O'Neal**, Festus, MO – *FedEx National LTL, Lakeland, FL*

3rd – **Charles Hargrave**, Trenton, IL – *UPS Freight, St. Louis, MO*

Tank Truck Class

1st – **Jon Hume**, Hillsboro, MO – *FedEx Freight, St. Charles, MO*

2nd – **Wim DePre'**, Billings, MO – *Prime, Inc., Springfield, MO*

3rd – **Russell Martin**, Meta, MO – *Con-way Freight, Rolla, MO*

Step Van Class

1st – **Rick Surrisi**, New Florence, MO – *FedEx Freight, Columbia, MO*

2nd – **Matthew Meadows**, Pacific, MO – *FedEx Ground, Overland, MO*

3rd – **John Aquino**, Kansas City, MO – *FedEx Express, Kansas City, MO*

Richard Rickelmann of St. Charles, MO, a driver for Witte Brothers Exchange, Inc. out of Troy, MO, was named "Rookie of the Year" for his outstanding well-rounded performance as a first-time contestant.

The "Pre-Trip Inspection" award for the highest score in assuring that a vehicle is in safe and efficient operating condition before leaving on a trip went to **Russell Martin** of Meta, MO, a driver for Con-way Freight, in Rolla, MO.

The "Team Championship" went to **FedEx Freight**, based in Harrison, AR for having the highest average team score in the competition.

The keynote speaker for the evening was **Col. James F. Keathley**, Superintendent, Missouri State Highway Patrol.

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