



# Snow Roadeo Prepares Public Workers for Winter Weather Ahead

*By Toni Dixon, Kansas LTAP*

On a rainy, summer day in Junction City, almost 60 participants came to the Kansas Snow Roadeo with winter weather conditions on their minds.

The Snow Roadeo is offered through APWA's Kansas Chapter, Riley County, the City of Manhattan, and the City of Junction City, which sets up the roadeo courses. Kansas LTAP facilitates the diagnostic part of the roadeo.

Between 15 and 20 people serve as judges and instructors. Kansas LTAP Instructor Mike Perkins is one of the trainers/judges at the Kansas Snow Roadeo. He has participated for the last three years.

Perkins said, "Considering that public works crews across the state are working hard to make up for lost time due to the unusually wet weather, there was a good turnout." Fifty-nine operators came from Topeka, Newton, Hays, Riley County, Lawrence, and Manhattan to participate and prepare for the snow and ice of winter weather ahead.

The Kansas Snow Rodeo consists of training and judging in four obstacle courses that test the skills needed most in messy winter weather.



### **Part One – Truck Driving with a Snow Plow Obstacle Course**

Part one includes an obstacle course and incorporates all the skills that an operator would use, such as tight maneuvering around parked cars or mailboxes. It also involves backing the truck and snow plow into a tight space, such as an alley. “We include a stop to test equipment, as in a normal day,” Perkins said.

### **Part Two – Motor Grader Obstacle Course**

This course involves similar obstacles, but using the blade at different angles, and it tests visual perception, how high to have the blade, and simulates moving material and placing it, “all part of what the operator would do on the job,” Perkins said.

### **Part Three – Skid Steer/ Loader Obstacle Course**

This course also involves work in pretty tight, close quarters, as well as picking materials up and loading them, and maneuvering around obstacles, but this is a timed event that incorporates basic and advanced skills.

### **Part Four – Diagnostics**

Kansas LTAP provides this portion of the course. Perkins, instructor and judge, said it focuses on making sure operators check their equipment and identify problems before they go out on the road. LTAP provides a checklist and Junction City provides pieces of equipment – a truck and snow plow, four wheel loader, and motor grader. “We make sure there are five defects on each piece of equipment for participants to find. The defects are easy to find, such as a light that is out, if you go through your checklist,” Perkins said, “but it takes a while if you’re just looking around.”

Cost to participate in the all-day event, held each August, is \$45, which covers all four parts and lunch. Perkins said he thought this was a very reasonable price, as most snow rodeos around the country charge about that much for each part. “The price is right, and it’s a positive experience.”

“The biggest benefit,” he said, “is that the operators come from all corners of the state, from cities and counties of various sizes. Over lunch they discover they have a lot in common and they brainstorm, compare notes and collaborate. You can hear them say, ‘Well, this is how we do it. How about you?’”

The 2019 Kansas Snow Roadeo had to be relocated from a parking lot at Midford State Lake, the site of the previous roadeos, to a parking lot in Junction City itself, because of flooding at the lake. It will be offered again next August, so watch the Kansas LTAP website for more information in 2020.

**Source for this article**

Interview with Mike Perkins, LTAP Instructor, August 18, 2019.

Photos courtesy of Mike Perkins, 2019 Kansas Snow Roadeo, Junction City, KS

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