

This definitely is not their first roadeo



(l-r) Michelle Brown, Rena Bishop and Sandy Wesley

Kansas sent some tough competitors to the National Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Roadeo, June 9-10 in Pittsburgh, PA.

Michelle Brown, Topeka Metro; Rena Bishop, OCCK, Inc. Salina; and Sandy Wesley, Marshall County Agency on Aging; are no strangers to the challenges of a transportation roadeo. Each is a recent winner of the Kansas Bus Roadeo.

Michelle Brown is Roadeo Winner 2016. "I have been a driver with Topeka Metro for 10 years. I have always loved to drive. When I was a teenager I used to just drive my car around for no reason," she said. "I am very excited and honored to be in this competition." Brown has "a wonderful boyfriend of five years."

Rena Bishop is Roadeo Winner 2015. "Driving for OCCK for the past eight years has allowed me to enjoy my passion for driving, as well as having time for my family and selling on eBay," she said.

Sandy Wesley holds the title as Kansas Bus Roadeo Winner 2017. "I've been driving trucks and buses for 28 years. The agency driving I like," she said. "We have elderly to handicap, and general public. I like helping people." Wesley has three children and five grandkids.

The CTAA Roadeo is the only national venue to honor and celebrate the value of rural and community transit operators, the backbone of the Community Transportation industry.

For the 29th year, this event drew drivers from around the country to compete for top scores on indoor courses that test skills on every level of the drivers' abilities, with a primary focus on safe operations and passenger sensitivity.

The National CTAA Roadeo is an opportunity for drivers to gain recognition for their driving skills. But while there are awards for the top finishers, winning is not the primary reason for the competition. The Community Transit Roadeo provides an opportunity to test an operator's limits, meet others in the profession and, above all, have a good time.

There are four events in which Roadeo drivers compete: Written Test, Driving Course, Pre-Trip Inspection, and Passenger Assistance (including Wheelchair Securement).

Each segment of the competition has varying potential for points. (Written Test is worth 125 points; Driving is worth 525; Passenger Assistance is 200 points and the Pre-Trip Test is 150 points.) Sections of the competition have time limits that can affect the driver's score. For example, drivers will earn an additional 25 points for completing the Pre-Trip Inspection within the seven-minute time limit.

For more information about CTTA and the Community Transit Roadeo, visit <http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=5181>

Want to see how a rodeo works? Check out Kansas RTAP trainer Anne Lowder's video of the Kansas Bus Rodeo 2015 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5wK4Gnslp8>.

Interested in trying out the competition for yourself? There's one coming up at the 4th Annual Kansas Bus Rodeo, August 12th at the Kansas State University football stadium in Manhattan. Register at ksrtap.org. KDOT is picking up the cost of registration fees, so come and test your skills for free.

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