

NTDC Canceled Because of Coronavirus Concerns

The 2021 Event Is Scheduled for Indianapolis

Eleanor Lamb | Staff Reporter

April 7, 2020 5:15 PM, EDT

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Competitors dive into their written exams at the 2019 National Truck Driving Championships and National Step Van Driving Championships, which were held in Pittsburgh. This year's event was to be held in Indianapolis. (John Sommers II for Transport Topics)

American Trucking Associations' National Truck Driving Championships and National Step Van Driving Championships have been canceled due to coronavirus-related concerns. But states remain free to make independent decisions about their own events.

ATA President Chris Spear in an April 6 letter informed professional truck drivers,

ATA members and state trucking association executives of the decision to cancel the

national event, which was scheduled to take place Aug. 19-22 in Indianapolis and is often called the “Super Bowl of Safety.”

“Our industry’s creed and the very spirit of these competitions is ‘safety first,’ and this decision reflects that, in the name of the industry, we must exercise an abundance of caution on behalf of the professional drivers, the fans, the spectators, along with the state associations, companies, and the community. We will host and cheer on the competitors.”

Spear also noted that, “because we are unable to practice at the state level during the

maintains the integrity of a “national” championship.

NTDC is an opportunity for hundreds of the most skilled truck drivers in the country — representing different states and different classes of vehicle — to compete against one another. During the event, drivers must complete a written test, a pre-trip inspection and a skills course.

The event draws crowds of supporters, many of whom are friends and family members of the competing drivers. Spear said ATA’s decision marks the first time since World War II that the event has been canceled.



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The ATA For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index fell 0.5% from July to 112.7, down from 113.3. The index also declined 1.6% year over year.

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Panelists stressed that while carriers that move early can gain a competitive advantage, workforce concerns remain a critical part of implementation.

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ATA's decision was released in the days following several state trucking associations' announcements that they would be canceling their championships. The state

championships determine the qualifiers who advance to NTDC.

Judges watch a tank truck reversing in Pittsburgh last year. (John Sommers II for Transport Topics) [Click here to continue to the news](#)

Arizona, New Hampshire and New York canceled their state truck driving championships within the last week. However, states are still considering their championships if they so choose. ATA has not announced its decision yet. It will follow its lead and cancel their competitions.

Several states that had initially postponed their competitions — including Mississippi, California, Georgia and North Carolina — are in the

deliberation process to decide whether to cancel or proceed with their events.

Kentucky and Wisconsin are considering scaled-down state championships later this year.

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Tennessee, Nevada, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina and New Mexico, which had initially postponed their events, have decided to cancel. Delaware and Pennsylvania have also canceled, and Maine has postponed its event indefinitely.

New Mexico Trucking Association Managing Director Johnny Johnson expressed disappointment over the decision regarding NTDC, and said his association plans to hold a driver appreciation program at some point this year.

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“I have been a strong supporter of the [state] TDCs and NTDC for many, many years and it comes with great disappointment that it had to come to this, but these are truly

uncharted waters for America and the industry as a whole,” Johnson said. “Our industry has always been and will always be safety first.”

Similarly, Ohio is considering options to honor truck drivers’ hard work this year.

Ohio Trucking Association and his team members know how much the community values the state event. Scott Woodrome of FedEx Express, a two-time champion two years running, hails from Ohio.

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participate in the nationals is not guaranteed, nor is it contingent that a state association have a national

championship to justify our existence,” Balzer said.

Virginia’s event is still postponed until further notice. Virginia Trucking Association President Dale Bennett said his group plans to send a notice to members to gauge interest in keeping the competition on the books. He said VTA will need to assess options and limitations, such as paring down the event if fewer drivers are available.

“If the membership wants it and supports doing it, I see no reason why not to proceed with it provided that we are in a better place with COVID-19,” Bennett said.

In his letter, Spear said ATA will look forward to holding the event next year in Minneapolis.

“Thank you for every mile you run and every delivery you make,” Spear wrote. “You make your families, our industry and entire country proud.”

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