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[Eleanor Lamb](#) | Staff Reporter
June 2, 2020 5:15 PM, EDT

TMCSuperTech Canceled; Fall Meeting Will Be Virtual



Competitors take the written test during the SuperTech competition Sept. 30, 2019, in Raleigh, N.C. (Jeremy Kirkpatrick/American Trucking Associations)

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The Technology & Maintenance Council of American Trucking Associations has canceled its competitions geared toward truck technicians that were scheduled for September.

In a letter to trucking industry professionals June 1, TMC Executive Director Robert Braswell announced that the National Technician Skills Competitions, known as TMC SuperTech, and the National Student Technician Competition, known as TMC FutureTech, will not be held in 2020.

TMC's fall meeting, the event during which these competitions take place, has been moved to an all-virtual format. The meeting still will be held Sept. 14-17.

 Robert Braswell

Braswell

The decision to make the fall meeting virtual was rooted in concerns regarding the coronavirus pandemic and its financial implications, Braswell told Transport Topics.

"The real issue that our members told us is that everybody is really anticipating [being] — or is right now — extremely busy making up for ground that they lost in the beginning of the year in terms of their businesses," Braswell said.

TMC's fall meeting generally attracts the same demographic as its spring meeting — shop supervisors, maintenance executives and engineering professionals. However, Braswell noted the fall event is smaller because it does not involve a trade show. TMC's task forces, transient groups meant to solve problems and then dissolve within a period of about two years, will meet throughout the day Sept. 15.

Braswell explained that all the events in the TMC fall meeting "pantheon" will be accessible through Cisco Webex, except for the task force meetings. The task forces will meet over conference calls, with support from the TMC Connect platform, through which their members can view presentations and drafts.

 Competitor during a SuperTech skills test

A competitor performs a skills test while judges watch during the SuperTech competition Sept. 30, 2019, in Raleigh, N.C. (ATA File Photo)

"That's where the task forces reside anyway, so having that combination [of] TMC Connect, where task forces are already used to doing work to begin with, combined with the telephone support for the audio, I think that'll be a workable solution," Braswell said.

Braswell added TMC is planning the first National Technician Appreciation Week for Sept. 21-25, the week after the fall meeting. During this week, TMC plans to hold training webinars for technicians each day.

TMC also plans to hold a series of preparatory webinars in August so fall meeting attendees are comfortable accessing sessions and engaging in a Webex environment.

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The fall meeting will be TMC's second virtual gathering of 2020. The first, scheduled for June 24, is a conference that will focus on vehicle electrical/electronic architecture and fleet benchmarking. Braswell acknowledged that the June event will be good exercise in preparing for the fall meeting, which is anticipated to be larger.

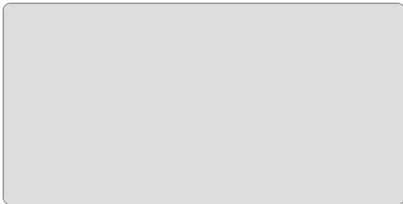
"This is the first year that we've done any virtual event, let alone two," Braswell said. "I think any practice is good."

He expressed optimism that virtual platforms such as Webex and Zoom, which employees have been relying on for months, will have prepared people for participation in online events.

Another positive aspect is that the virtual event may attract people who otherwise couldn't have afforded to invest in travel for a meeting.

"The advantage that a virtual environment provides you is we may be able to attract folks that never would have the ability to come to a TMC meeting," Braswell said. "It's not always something somebody can do, so now you'll be able to experience TMC without having to incur travel expenses."

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