

TMC Kicks Off Spring Meeting in Virtual Format

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Dan Ronan | Senior Reporter

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ATA'S TECHNOLOGY & MAINTENANCE COUNCIL

SPRING MEETING

A Virtual Event

American Trucking Associations' Technology and Maintenance Council Annual Meeting is being reconfigured this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From April 12 to April 15 and then April 19-23, TMC will be a virtual event. The council will reconvene Sept. 12-16 in Ohio for its fall meeting and exhibition, at the Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland. The plan to meet in-person is based on more people having had the opportunity to be vaccinated and more companies resuming business travel.

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TMC Executive Director Robert Braswell told Transport Topics that the trucking industry has been one of the leaders during the pandemic, and the decision to meet virtually for the first two segments was the correct call.

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“It’s always a tough decision to make, but typically our largest event is a 1,000,000-square-foot trade show, and for a number of reasons.



d. “The Annual Meeting is typically our largest event, with 1,000 attendees, a 500,000-square-foot trade show, and for a number of reasons.

“It was originally scheduled for Orlando in March 2021, then we moved it to April, but it just wasn’t possible. We had to come up with a Plan C.”

Braswell said all of the regular events at a TMC meeting, including the task forces, study groups, and committee meetings, will occur. However, some things will be rescheduled to September.

“It won’t have the in-person events, the awards, the changing of the guard, we won’t be installing new leadership and officers,” he said. “We won’t be doing our graduation for our ‘TMC Leaders of Tomorrow’ program.

“It will be bare-bones, but it’s the important work of the council that will be able to happen, and we’ll do it virtually. We have a lot of great educational sessions planned. The first step moving forward is the spring session.”

The trends are looking much more positive now, from every segment, and we see a confidence in our members.

TMC Executive Director Robert Braswell

After rescheduling TMC and then postponing it, Braswell said he and his staff are taking things in stride and optimistic the Cleveland event will take place.

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“I’m as confident as I can be of anything in the year of COVID,” he said. “The trends are looking much more positive now, from every segment, and we see a confidence in our members,” Braswell said. “A great many of our members, especially the medium- and large-sized companies, had travel restrictions, all the way through July 1. They were not going to be able to go to Orlando or to the movies what.”

2021 TMC Promo_Br

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“But we’re not seeing those restrictions being a concern from our members in the third and fourth quarter of 2021. But certainty is not a word I use in this COVID leap year, as we’re calling this TMC.”

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When TMC meets in Cleveland, the TMC SuperTech 2021 skills competition will be held, but FutureTech won't be held until 2022. Braswell said TMC SuperTech will be scaled down but that it's essential to resume the event.

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"For the fall, we'll hold it. It will be a one-day competition with 10 or 11 stations."

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Braswell said that by September, it will have been more than 18 months between in-person meetings for members.

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minate in 2020 as we were
t to happen in the trucking
f the late-February
a, "and it looks like we will
vent to kick off the in-
person season again. TMC is going to bookend

the COVID-19 pandemic in a way. We are looking forward to the COVID pandemic ending, and we're looking forward to better times."

Because of the change in meeting dates and locations, Braswell said TMC's leadership that oversees the council will remain an additional six months. The new chairman, board

members and other officials will take their seats in September.

He added that despite the challenges the pandemic has imposed on the trucking industry, he is most proud that trucking has proved vital to the U.S. economy. That, Braswell said, will be the industry's legacy when the final chapter is written on COVID-19.

"This is something that trucking always does no matter what kind of crisis has been thrown at it," he said. "Since the dawn of the 1900s, whether it was a war, a pandemic, or other economic calamity, trucking has always found a way to deliver the

goods for its customers, and this is no exception.”

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