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Truck shows forced to adapt

JULY 01, 2020 | [MARK SCHREMMER](#)



OOIDA member Jamie Walker had attended the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, Ky., since he was a teenager.

However, the 42-year-old London, Ky., resident had never entered his rig in the annual PKY Truck Beauty Championship. That was all set to change for the 2020 show. Walker was going to bring his 2001 Peterbilt 379 to be judged at MATS.

Those plans were derailed when MATS officials announced March 12 that they were canceling the 2020 show because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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“It is with a heavy heart and deep regret that we announce the cancellation of the 2020 Mid-America Trucking Show scheduled for March 26-28 in Louisville, Ky.,” the MATS website stated on March 12. “This is a decision we did not make lightly, but in consultation with our exhibitors, attendees, supporters and partners, including Kentucky Venues, Louisville Tourism, Kentucky Governor’s Office, and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.”

MATS was one of the first truck shows of the season that was **forced to cancel**, postpone or adapt its event because of the pandemic.

When MATS canceled, organizers quickly turned their attention to the 2021 show, which is scheduled for March 25-27 in Louisville.



“MATS has a proud tradition as the largest and most well-attended show in heavy-duty trucking,” the truck show’s website stated. “We will return stronger than ever in 2021 and will focus on an unforgettable 50th anniversary event.”

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The PKY Truck Beauty Championship altered its format to an online Show Truck Bracket Challenge. According to the MATS website, 107 trucks from the United States, Canada, Netherlands, Colombia and Japan entered the 2020 PKY People's Choice Competition online.

Jamie's wife, Jessica, entered the 2001 Peterbilt into the seven-round competition, which started April 14 and ended May 12.



By the time the 110 head-to-head matchups were over, with more than 150,000 votes cast, Walker's truck received the 2020 PKY People's Choice Award.

It meant a lot for a guy who had attended MATS with his father, Raymond Walker, for decades. Raymond, who also was a trucker, died in March 2018.

"It was a pretty neat experience to win something like that," Walker said. "Winning the People's Choice means a lot, and it means more to me to win with a working truck. Those show trucks are nice to look at, but I like the work trucks."

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Jamie also thanked Jessica and their sons Coye and Dawsen for helping him win the popular vote.

“I didn’t think much about it when she said she was entering me, but then I kept winning, and I started to pay more attention each week,” he said.

Walker’s 2001 Peterbilt defeated Chad Smith’s 2019 Peterbilt 389 in the championship.

While gearing up for the 2021 show, MATS said it is planning to host more online events in the coming months.

American Truck Historical Society National Convention & Truck Show

ATHS was still able to have its truck show in May, but organizers had to pivot to a virtual format.

The show was originally scheduled to be held at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. Instead, the show ran virtually from May 28 through May 30.

According to Laurence Gration, executive director for ATHS, the show had a record 1,455 entries representing 11 countries and every state in the U.S.

Gration said the virtual show went “exceptionally well” with almost 20,000 views from people in 37 countries to look at photos and videos of the nearly 1,500 trucks.

The 2021 ATHS show is scheduled for Harrisonburg, Va., but the group still plans to have an increased virtual presence going forward.

Wheel Jam

The annual event in Huron, S.D., which was scheduled for June 4-7, canceled because of the pandemic.

“Wheel Jam has been kicking off the summer for 16 years,” the Wheel Jam website stated. “We were well into planning festivities for the 17th annual Wheel Jam and looking forward to all the wheels and people coming together the first weekend in June. We are beyond disappointed to announce that Wheel Jam 2020 ... has been canceled due to the uncertainties of COVID-19. The health and safety of our event goers and their family and friends are a top priority. We will certainly miss seeing everyone this year. We look forward to seeing you in 2021.”

Walcott Truckers Jamboree

The 2020 Walcott Truckers Jamboree planned a virtual show for July 9-11.

Starting in 1979, the annual show at the Iowa 80 Truck Stop is planned as a way to give back to truck drivers. But because of the pandemic, Walcott wasn't able to have its in-person show in 2020.

“We want drivers to know how much we appreciate the hard work they do,” said Delia Moon Meier, senior vice president. “This certainly isn't the way we thought our ... Jamboree would play out, but we care about drivers and their families and we still want to celebrate them. We truly hope everyone understands, and we hope that you will join us in spirit and online July 9-11 in celebration of trucking. We look forward to seeing everyone in person in 2021.”

The virtual schedule of events include an antique truck display, a super truck beauty contest, a pet contest, and a online display of the Iowa 80 Trucking Museum. More information can be found at iowa80truckstop.com.

Great American Trucking Show

“Randall-Reilly is canceling the Great American Trucking Show, scheduled for Aug. 27-29, 2020,” the GATS website stated. “This decision has been made with the health and well-being of all participants first and foremost in mind.”

GATS officials did not provide a specific date for a 2021 show.

“We remain committed to producing events like GATS that showcase the latest information in trucking, equipment, parts and accessories, as well as access to jobs,” the GATS website stated. “We will use the coming months to determine what form future events take and assess the safeguards needed to ensure your health.”

The event started in 1999.

Guilty By Association Truck Show

As of early June, the GBATS event in Joplin, Mo., was still planned as an in-person event for Sept. 24-26.

“We are full speed ahead,” said Bryan Martin, the show’s organizer. “We’ve

been working with

Joplin officials and everything looks good.”

Martin also said that GBATS will have the luxury of seeing how other large events, such as NFL games, go before hosting its truck show in late September. That will allow GBATS to make any needed adjustments beforehand, Martin said.

The show has a full slate of events scheduled, including diesel drag races, motorcycle stunt riders, a truck and tractor pull, a truck convoy, and a concert featuring country music singer Rodney Atkins.

Martin said there is even more interest in the show than usual with so many of the 2020 trucking events opting to cancel or move to a virtual format.

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More information about the show can be found at ChromeShopMafia.com. *LL*



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