



Charleston County News Release

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See photos: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/2008BackhoeRodeo.htm>

Charleston County Places First in Regional Public Works Rodeo

Three County competitors place first, sixth and eleventh in American Public Works Association Regional Backhoe Rodeo.

Three of Charleston County's Public Works Department equipment operators had the honor of competing in the American Public Works Association Regional Backhoe Rodeo, and all three had impressive scores.

Robin Middleton of the Charleston County Public Works Department took first place in the regional competition held in Georgetown County, winning the event with a combined score of 204 seconds. He won all three of the timed events on a backhoe, leading to his regional "Backhoe 'Cowboy' Champion" title.

Middleton works in the North Area Maintenance Camp and lives in Hollywood. The other Charleston County employees who participated were Kevin Brown (from Ladson) of the Johns Island Maintenance Camp, who took sixth place, and Robert Doctor (from North Charleston) of the East Cooper Maintenance Camp, who took eleventh place.

"Participation in the rodeo allows our employees a chance to display their skills and experience, as well as become recognized as Charleston County's finest equipment operators," said John Myers, Interim Field Operations Manager for Charleston County's Public Works Department. "I am extremely proud of these gentlemen and their accomplishment. They have great attitudes and never waver from the job task or mission."

Middleton will represent Charleston County and the Lowcountry region at the State Championship Rodeo, which will be held at the 2008 Annual Equipment show in Myrtle Beach on July 9. He will face the winners of the other regional events around South Carolina, including last year's state champion from Richland County, who also won his regional event this year.

A backhoe is a large piece of road equipment used by public works staff to dig holes and trenches and to load trucks. Displaying "finesse" with a machine that stands eight feet tall and weighs nine tons requires some special skills. Competitors must use the equipment to maneuver materials through small, tight spaces under strict time limits.

The American Public Works Association Regional Backhoe Rodeo is a fun event that promotes National Public Works Week, which was May 21 – 24 this year.

The 16 participants in this year's regional competition represented 11 counties and cities. This year marks the second year in a row that Charleston County Public Works has placed in the top three regional finalists.

The Regional Backhoe Rodeo Competition provides a public forum to demonstrate the skills

of personnel in the operation of backhoes, while providing an opportunity to recognize exceptional performance. Local contestants who were invited to the regional competition are experienced, recognized operators employed by Charleston County Government.

The competition consists of events that focus on operational requirements and emphasize safety. Judges are qualified in the observation of safe and proper backhoe operational techniques and are impartial to the participants.

Prior to the regionals, Charleston County's Public Works Department held its own competition in Charleston. The following Public Works Department employees participated in this event:

- Randy Chesser
- Charles Eaton
- Marvin Green
- Roger Elliot
- Dario Buggs
- John Brown
- Walter Gaillard
- Trea West
- Paul Porter
- Kevin Watts (placed fourth in the County's competition)

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