



LAURA BEAHN/Tribune

Michael Peterson checks out the CPI truck he will ride in during the World's Largest Truck Convoy Saturday in Hastings.

# Special convoy

TRUCKERS DRIVE IN EVENT  
TO BENEFIT SPECIAL  
OLYMPICS

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**T**ruckers and law enforcement teamed up to help provide unique experiences for athletes with Special Olympics Nebraska through the World's Largest Truck Convoy on Saturday.

Drivers of about 45 semi-trailer trucks participated in the 20th annual event, offering rides to athletes looking forward to the opportunity.

"Riding in the truck is awesome," said Cindy Hemberger of Hastings. "We look forward to this event."

Hemberger is a Special Olympics athlete who has participated since 2010. She said the truck drivers are easy to talk with and she appreciates the chance to ride from the starting point at the Adams County Fairgrounds to the Bosselman Travel Center south of Grand Island.

"They are willing to give up time from jobs and families to help," she said. "It's just



LAURA BEAHN/Tribune

Brian Bader rides to Grand Island Saturday as part of the World's Largest Truck Convoy.

great they give up their time for this."

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Trucks participating in the World's Largest Truck Convoy leave the Adams County Fairgrounds Saturday morning as they transport Special Olympics participants to Grand Island.

## Convoy: Truckers drive in annual event to benefit Special Olympics

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The annual convoy partners Special Olympics Nebraska, law enforcement and truckers to raise money for the Special Olympics and have fun at the same time.

On Friday night, the athletes interacted with local law enforcement and truck drivers as they shared a meal. Saturday saw the main event as athletes paired up with drivers for the trek to Grand Island. Some talked on the CB radio or blew the truck's horn.

Law enforcement from the Hastings Police Department, Adams County Sheriff's Office and Nebraska State Patrol helped with traffic as the convoy exited the fairgrounds and headed south to U.S. Highway 6/34, east to Showboat Boulevard, north to 42nd Street and west to U.S. Highway 281 before making the trip north to the travel center just north of the interstate.

At the Bosselman Travel Center, they had a raffle, awards ceremony and grill-out for all the participants.

Roger Duering of Hastings, truck convoy coordinator, said drivers and trucking companies enjoy helping with the cause to raise money for Special Olympics. He said he enjoys seeing the drivers and athletes bond over the experience.

"I've been happy over the years how well drivers communicate with athletes," he said. "Everybody gets along just great. They just really enjoy doing it."

Rose Swenson, events and law enforcement partnership manager with Special Olympics Nebraska, said the convoy is a great way to fortify the cooperation between the games, truck drivers and law enforcement across the state. The convoy also provides overall awareness of the games and their purpose.

Special Olympics Nebraska transforms the lives of over 6,000 individuals with and without disabilities through programming in sports, health, education and leadership as a way to end discrimination and fear.

During the opening ceremony, Capt. Jason Haase with the Hastings Police Department said he appreciated seeing the support of athletes in the community and across the state.

"Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for doing what you're doing," he said. "The reason we are all here is for the Special Olympics."

Hastings City Councilman Marc Rowan also addressed the group before the convoy launched. He said the event holds special significance for him as the father of a child with special needs.

"The city of Hastings thanks you for putting this on," he said. "It's just a wonderful event."