

# Announcing the 2023 National Gas Rodeo Championship Teams

*"Gas Masters" from Piedmont Natural Gas, and "Gang Related" from Spire, are the 2023 National Gas Rodeo Overall Champion Teams.*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Teams of natural gas professionals competed in the National Gas Rodeo recently to prove their expertise in job-related skills. Forty teams from throughout the country participated in the 2023 rodeo, but only two teams earned overall championship status in the end.



"Gang Related" representing Spire

Barry Hicks, captain; Brandon Vickery; and Miquel Ochoa, alternate of team "Gang Related" represented Spire and earned the two-person team overall championship title. Jakie Exum, captain; Peyton Huff; Cameron Smith; Chase McCroskey; and Mitch Cothran, alternate of team "Gas Masters" representing Piedmont Natural Gas are the four-person team overall champions. Of special note, for the first time the team with the fastest time for the two-person Service Installation event was an all-female team, "Gashouse Gals" representing Spire.

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We're continually inspired by the dedication these teams show, and not just during the rodeo, but every day on the job”

*Leigh Larson, president and CEO, MEA*

The rodeo, a program of MEA Energy Association (MEA),

builds camaraderie and pride in the natural gas industry by performing safe, time-efficient tasks. All 22 two-person teams and 18 four-person teams are challenged to compete in qualifying events including: safely and quickly install a service line, dig a pit by hand, cut a six-inch metal pipe, and assemble a meter set during the qualifying round. The top 10 two-person and four-person teams move on to compete in the relay — an event with multiple, sequential tasks, including the precise maneuvering of a utility truck with trailer and picking up and moving an egg with a backhoe bucket.

The teams typically prepare for this annual event with several hours of practice and strategizing. Some utilities host internal rodeos before entering the National Gas Rodeo. "We're continually inspired by the dedication these teams show, and not just during the rodeo, but every day on the job," remarked Leigh Larson, president and CEO of MEA.



"Gas Masters" representing Piedmont Natural Gas

The 40 teams included six teams from Ameren, five teams from Spire, and newcomer CPS Energy of San Antonio provided five teams. City Utilities of Springfield was co-host to the National Gas Rodeo for the second year. Larson praised the utility for creating an environment where participants and their families felt welcomed and appreciated. For those who couldn't attend, a live stream was available on [Facebook.com/nationalgasrodeo](https://www.facebook.com/nationalgasrodeo).

The National Gas Rodeo Committee provides guidance and overall support for the organization and delivery of the rodeo competition. In addition to defining the events, rules, and schedule, they prepare the site and judge. "The National Gas Rodeo Committee deserves special acknowledgment for their meticulous planning, attention to detail, and outstanding execution," continues Larson. "They ensure the rodeo's reputation as a top-tier event in the natural gas industry."

#### FASTEST TIMES: Qualifying Events and Relay

##### Two-Person Field

- Meter Set: "Gang Related", Spire
- Pipe Cut: "State Line", Spire
- Service Installation: "Gashouse Gals", Spire
- Hand Dig: "High Volume", Colorado Springs Utilities
- Relay: "Gang Related", Spire

##### Four-Person Field

- Meter Set: "Complete Combustion", Ameren Missouri
- Pipe Cut: "Cutline Cowboys", Piedmont Natural Gas
- Service Installation: "Smokin' Aces", Spire
- Hand Dig: "Gas Masters", Piedmont Natural Gas
- Relay: "Gas Masters", Piedmont Natural Gas

#### 2023 NATIONAL GAS RODEO OVERALL CHAMPIONS:

##### Two-Person Field

- 1st Place: “Gang Related”, Spire | Captain: Barry Hicks | Brandon Vickery | Alternate: Miguel Ochoa
- 2nd Place: “State Line”, Spire | Captain: Jim Lee | David Cramblitt
- 3rd Place: “High Pressure Hitmen”, Piedmont Natural Gas | Captain: Reece Graves | William Andrews | Alternate: Kenneth State

#### Four-Person Field

- 1st Place: “Gas Masters”, Piedmont Natural Gas | Captain: Jamie Exum | Peyton, Huff | Cameron Smith | Chase McCroskey | Alternate: Mitch Cothran
- 2nd Place: “Cutline Cowboys”, Piedmont Natural Gas | Captain: Christian Hernandez | Brian Trickett | Franyer Koschnny | Richard Bradley | Alternate: Juan Hudson Jr.
- 3rd Place: “Gas Sicario”, Xcel Energy | Captain: Edwardo Angulo | Luis Mireles | Dereck Villasana | Kyle Saucedo | Alternate: Zachary Romero

The Spirit of the Rodeo Award was presented to team “Kgas Cowboys”, JD Linville, captain; J.P. Powell; and Casey Baliel, alternate representing IBEW 304, for displaying exemplary sportsmanship.

“Come & Take It” from CSP Energy won the contest for favorite team shirt and the charity of their choice will receive a \$500 donation, sponsored by IBEW Local 304.

The intense competition and camaraderie of the National Gas Rodeo offer natural gas utilities from across the country an opportunity to showcase their teamwork, skills, and professionalism. Participation in the National Gas Rodeo plays an important role in developing a mindset of efficiency, proficiency, and safety when working in the natural gas field.

MEA remains committed to supporting workers in the natural gas industry and is looking forward to the 2024 rodeo, which will be hosted by Duke Energy at Turfway Park in Kentucky. Learn more about the National Gas Rodeo at [nationalgasrodeo.org](https://nationalgasrodeo.org).

The National Gas Rodeo is a program of MEA and was hosted by City Utilities of Springfield, MO. The rodeo is made possible through the premier level support of Case Construction, Henkels & McCoy, and Milwaukee Tool. Individual events were sponsored by MEADE and ZEVAC. Special events were sponsored by GROEBNER; Hydro X, an Artera Company; IBEW Local 304; and Tyndale.

#### About MEA Energy Association:

MEA serves the people that deliver electricity and natural gas to homes and businesses. We were founded as a trade association over 115 years ago by distribution utilities whose vision was to improve safety and efficiency. Today, we fulfill the same purpose through education, leadership development, and industry connections. Energy delivery companies, contractors, and suppliers around the country benefit from our 55 summits, roundtables, and webinars, 400+ online technical courses, safety assessments, evaluator training, operator qualification compliance tools, and leadership courses for field personnel.

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