



Anthony has delicate touch

A Waikanae excavator operator is honing his egg-carrying and slam-dunk skills as he prepares for the Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ) National Excavator Operator Competition.

Anthony King of Goodman Contractors will join the winners from eight other regions, along with 2016 defending national champion Steve Galbraith of Hawke's Bay, to battle it out at the Central Districts Field Days at Manfield Park, Fielding, on March 17 and 18.

The competition follows a win at the CCNZ Regional Excavator Operator Competition, held during the recent Upper Hutt Summer Carnival.

Competition manager Malcolm Abernethy said the national competition is an intense two-day event comprising four elements

Included is a main course, where competitors have to complete 12 to 15 activities in 60 minutes using 12-tonne Hitachi excavators,

including pouring a cup of tea, carrying a fresh egg, slam dunking a ball and a series of excavation exercises.

An emergency scenario will also see contestants respond to a realistic emergency situation involving first-aid skills and emergency response, while a Gerald the Giraffe event will see competitors judged on how well they brief young children to operate Gerald, a 1.7 tonne Hitachi mini digger.

Lastly, a One Day Job event will invite competitors to construct something using a 5-tonne machine.

The task, according to organisers, is equivalent to a full day of work but must be completed in just 60 minutes.

Mr Abernethy said the elements of the competition would demonstrate the high level of skill and specialised knowledge needed to operate an excavator safely in 2017.

"Points are awarded not just for successfully completing each task but for

other criteria such as health and safety knowledge, performance under pressure and strategic planning skills.

"For example, before any operator digs a trench they should be checking for any buried service lines."

Various awards and prizes will be given out to competitors at an industry

awards dinner on Saturday, March 18.

Mr Abernethy encouraged the general public to attend the competition, which was "always a lot of fun".

"Many of these operators end up being supervisors or junior managers on a construction site.

"They're the future leaders of a huge and thriving industry, so it's rewarding to see them in action."



COMPETITIVE: Waikanae excavator Anthony King. PHOTO: KAP020317SPLANTHONYKINGCLOE WILLETTS