



Gerald adds fun element to digger displays

Children as young as two will have the opportunity to operate a 1.7-tonne digger, known as Gerald the Giraffe, at the Central Districts Field Days in Feilding on March 17 and 18.

For a gold coin donation, children will be taught how to operate Gerald, a Cable Price Hitachi digger.

The kids will be supervised by one of the finalists of the Civil Contractors NZ National Excavator Operator competition, held at National Field Days, where New Zealand's top excavator operators will compete to be crowned New Zealand's best.

They will sit next to each child, talking them through how to safely operate the machine and all money raised is donated to Child Cancer Foundation.

As well as the chance to operate Gerald, spectators can observe competitors in the operator competition complete tricky tasks with a 12-tonne Hitachi digger including pouring a cup of tea, slam dunking a basketball and transporting an egg.

"It's a great event for families and spectators," competition manager Malcolm Abernethy says.

"We encourage everyone to come down and enjoy some fun, including watching some enormous machines doing some great manoeuvres."

The national competition is an intense two-day event comprising a number of elements.

The main course sees competitors complete 12 to 15 activities in 60 minutes using 12-tonne Hitachi excavators.

In the emergency scenario contestants must respond to a realistic emergency situation involving first-aid skills and emergency response.

In the One Day Job event competitors must construct something using a 5-tonne machine. The task is equivalent to a full-day task but must be completed in just 60 minutes.

Sponsored by Cable Price, the competition aims to raise the profile of the industry that continues to grow and embrace the latest technology. The construction and maintenance industry carries out \$12 billion of work annually, employing 60,000 workers including excavator operators.

The competition is held on a site located in the Contractors' corner in the south east area of the Field Days site at Manfeild Park, Feilding.

The competition is organised by the Manawatu branch of Civil Contractors NZ and other major event sponsors include Cable Price – Hitachi, Humes, Hirepool, Z, First Gas, Connexis, Attach 2 Equipment and Contractor Magazine.



A digger known as Gerald the Giraffe will be part of the fun at the Civil Contractors NZ National Excavator Operator competition during the Central Districts Field Days.

