

Maintenance Mania

National Championship



Sixth Time's the Charm

Wichita's Justin Heenan is crowned Maintenance Mania® National Champion.

BY LAUREN BOSTON

HIS SIX-YEAR QUEST for the title is over—and his wife can finally get the garage back.

After competing in the Maintenance Mania® National Championship since 2008, Key Management's Justin Heenan of Wichita, Kan., reaped the benefits of all his time and hard work and was crowned NAA Maintenance Mania National Champion at the 7th annual competition—held June 20 during the 2013 NAA Education Conference & Exposition in San Diego.

Heenan earned the top spot with an overall time of 1 minute, 23.838 seconds. He was followed by Billerica, Mass.-based Horizon Realty Management's Jason Frotten (1:24.627) and Indianapolis-based Van Rooy Properties' Brian Niehaus, who took third in 1:28.746.

"When Jason got second place, I knew I had first—but when they called my name, it was crazy," says Heenan, who spent nearly eight months preparing for the championship by practicing on near-scale models of each event that he constructed in his garage and basement. "This is pretty awesome."



(Above) Six-time finalist Justin Heenan from Wichita, Kan., celebrates his championship performance. (Below) San Diego Apartment Association earned the Spirit Award.

It was a hard-earned victory for Heenan, who also lost 53 pounds since February to "get lighter on my feet." The dedication paid off. By defeating Frotten by less than one second, Heenan won two iPads, a washer and dryer, a custom-embroidered jacket and the trophy itself—a prize package worth more than \$11,000.

"That's not bad for a minute, 23 [seconds] of work," Heenan says. "It was pretty sweet."

When co-workers got the text message that Heenan had actually won, Key Management office administrator Sheila Tasker says the Wichita office went crazy.

"It was a flurry of congratulatory texts going back and forth," Tasker says. She says several employees plan to watch Heenan compete in the 2014 Maintenance

Mania National Championship in Denver, should he qualify again.

Now back in Kansas, Heenan says he's enjoying his 15 minutes of fame. "There were 10 people waiting for me when I got off the plane, which was especially exciting given that it was 10 p.m.," Heenan says. "When I got back into the office Monday



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Event finalists pose with HD Supply's Anesa Chaibi after the competition in San Diego.



Angel Munoz, CTL Management, from the Washington Multi-Family Housing Association, competes at the championships.

morning, my co-workers were super excited and happy for me. They said, 'Here's the Champ!' In the maintenance industry, there's a lot of buzz."

Not even his 18-year-old son, Trai, can escape the hype surrounding his dad's national championship. At his new maintenance job, his co-workers "always ask if he's going to be the next Maintenance Mania Champion now," Heenan says. Trai says he's going to beat me one of these days."

Putting the 'Man' in Maintenance Mania

Heenan wasn't the only one to walk away a winner. Representatives from the San Diego County Apartment Association, who came to support hometown favorite Joel Martinez, Lincoln Military Housing, took home the Spirit Award.

"It was so much fun to get behind all the contestants and have a fun rivalry with the other associations—it was the best," says Jeannie Alliss, Director of Advertising and Events for the Apartment Association of Orange County.

Although he didn't take home the Spirit Award, one gentleman from the First Coast Apartment Association was sporting a full-body orange leotard, putting the "man" in "mania." Fortunately he was also wearing shorts. Across the arena, two members of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) wore Baltimore Orioles t-shirts with the team's All-Star third baseman Manny's last name on the back. But they were in San Diego to support another man with the same surname—MMHA's own Jon Machado.

Other highlights included 19-year-old competitor Wesley

Fonseca of Post Properties, whose parents flew from Atlanta to cheer on their son. "I've had the time of my life and I really do appreciate the opportunity to be here," says Fonseca, who has just one year of experience as a maintenance technician.

For others, the journey to San Diego wasn't without a few bumps in the road. First Coast Apartment Association Jimmy Garcia's luggage was lost en route to San Diego. With his race car left behind in Chicago (all participants hand-make a race car out of spare maintenance parts to use during the competition), Garcia had to start from scratch to compete in that final event (race car). Fortunately several other Maintenance Mania competitors came to the rescue by accompanying Garcia to a local hardware store and helping him make a new car in time for the competition.

All competitors were recognized for the integral role they play in the apartment industry. "After a resident moves in, it's the maintenance technician who keeps the resident happy," says Chairman of the Board Alex Jackiw, CAPS, CPM. "These guys are the best. You have my utmost respect and admiration."

But perhaps the biggest cheerleader of all was Heenan's wife.

"When I called my wife, all I heard were screams of excitement and happiness," Heenan says. "She said after all the hard work and dedication I put in—not to mention taking over her basement and garage to practice—I better have won. I got the trophy; she got her brand-new washer and dryer, and the garage back."

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