

Kelly-Miller Circus to take new acts on the road

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HUGO, Okla. — Featuring an abundance of circus acts and performers but very few circus workers, Kelly-Miller Circus takes to the road March 15 on a 220-day adventure under the big top.

The circus will open its usual circuit in the Agriplex in Hugo, with two shows on March 15, then head to Idabel, Dallas, Fort Worth and then eastward to the east coast.

"We visit 15 states on our route that takes us to the end of the season normally in the last week of October," Kelly-Miller home office manager Jill Jones said. "We have plenty of performers, but we are still looking for more circus workers, and we have less than five weeks to find them before we go on the road."

"Not a lot of Americans want to leave home and travel around the country with the circus for eight months," said Jim Royal of Kelly-Miller. "It is a very serious concern for us, but we are trying different methods of recruiting now in hopes of getting more workers."

The dilemma is that circuses, carnivals and fairs depend on foreign seasonal workers, and Congress has yet to pass the H2B exemption that would allow enough workers to come into the country on seasonal work passes.

Kelly-Miller has some new acts this year, including Casey McCoy's tigers, and the Black Angels troupe of acrobats from Kenya. The Black Angels are famous for limbo dancing and human pyramids.

This year, the circus will have Fridman Torales from Peru, who will walk upside down on the top of the tent during the show.

Sara Greene is a new trapeze artist from New Hampshire, who has spent a lot of time in Ireland.

Bareback riding returns to the circus this year on two big Belgian horses.

The circus is now in the process of putting on coats of new paint and making repairs to take the show on the road.

This year a new mechanics truck has been added and a mobile sleeper tour vehicle that sleeps 10 people.

Circus workers are redoing the seating area to make the box seats more friendly.

The seating area also will be more safe this year. Workers are changing the way the support rails at the end of the circus seats are made, moving the rails from a horizontal position to a vertical position to keep kids from climbing up and falling over.

The circus also has a newly renovated show mobile office.

Circus tickets should be in outlets sometime late next week for the shows in Hugo and Idabel.