

## The show must go on

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HUGO, Okla. — Carson & Barnes Circus must overcome some worker shortages, but the show takes to the road beginning March 14.

This year the show opens a three-day run in Dallas and through the North Texas area before heading back to Paris March 24.

The Paris shows will be at the Lamar County Fairgrounds.

After that, Carson & Barnes plans to head across the southern U.S., up the East Coast, back across the country and down the West Coast before wintering in Hugo.

The trip will cover approximately 200 cities and towns in a two-shows per day schedule.

Preparing to take the show on the road this year will be much more difficult than in years past because of a shortage of circus workers.

That was brought about by Congress' delay in extending the H2B immigration bill to allow seasonal foreign workers into the country to supply the needs of ski lodges, landscaping, fairs, circuses and carnivals.

H2B allows only 60,000 seasonal workers into the country each year, and they must return to their homelands after the season is over.

Seeing that was not enough to cover the needs of American businesses, Congress two years ago passed a bill to exempt workers who had successfully worked in the U.S. on H2B before.

That exemption expired last fall, dropping the total who could enter the country on H2B back to 60,000.

Ski lodges, hotels, landscaping businesses and others snapped up the workers, taking all 60,000 before the new year began, leaving circuses and carnivals and fairs without enough workers for their seasons.

"Our workers are going to have to double up and do triple time on the work load until we can get the exemptions back," said Traci Cavallini of Carson & Barnes. "We have a good show this year and it is about ready to go on the road."

Carson & Barnes will have many new performers for this year's show, and a new baby elephant, Val, born in April to show off to the world.

Another young elephant born to the 29-member herd a few years ago — 4-year-old Obert — will perform.

"He's always a crowd pleaser," Cavallini said.

Cavallini said there will be several new performers and performing groups in this year's show.