

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TENT RAISING: GROWING A CIRCUS RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES

There's something about the sights, sounds, smells, and sense of adventure at an old fashioned circus tent raising that touches the heart of the child in each of us, allowing us to suspend doubt and know that on the day the circus comes to town, an ordinary field or parking lot can sprout a Big Top and grow a whole circus city right before our eyes.

Beginning at daybreak on opening day of the Cole Bros. Circus engagement, high-tech machinery grows a family tradition: the World's Largest Circus Under the Big Top. Pounding steel stakes in the ground, the stakedriver sings a dissonant "cha-clang," while rumbling tigers, snorting horses and a cacophony of voices speaking a dozen languages combine to create a live soundtrack for the tent-raising event. Electric winches hoist skyward eight giant towers, the "King Poles" that center the fabric structure and anchor aerial rigging, lighting, and sound equipment. Forklifts deliver bundles of colorful vinyl to workers who spread, lace together and attach the material to bale rings, which ascend to the top of the King Poles, five stories high, to create a striking canopy of crimson and gold.

When the tent reaches its full height of fifty-five feet, the impressive interior of the tent reveals itself as an undulating sky of midnight blue, pierced with comets and sprinkled with sparkling stars under which an army of workers swarms to construct nearly 3,000 seats. Garbed in jeans and T-shirts, rather than sequins and spangles, performers enter the Big Top to set riggings, assemble props, and rehearse their acts.

Look closely and you might spot the Romeiros from Brazil practicing martial arts, or the death-defying aerial daredevils from the Neves Flyers rigging their trapezes at the apex of the Big Top.

A tent-raising visit to the Cole Bros. Circus backyard offers visitors an unforgettable, up close and personal view of more than 100 human and animal performers. At tent raising, visitors can peer behind the Big Top and see Cheryl Haddad and her pure White, Golden Tabby and Royal Bengal Tigers, Valeriy Tsoraev's feline actors, Zarina, the Human Cannonball and her World's Largest Cannon, and the Kim Brothers and their handsome steeds. A visit to tent raising not only allows the visitor to explore the inner workings of the Circus, it presents an opportunity to share the experience of making its magic world come alive.

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