

# Screening offered for those interested in a career in trucking

by Stella Shepard

PEI Trucking Sector Council

**D**avid Victor of Montague left school at an early age in search of employment in western Canada. Since then, he has clocked a lifetime of working long, hard hours at labour-intensive jobs. For the past six years, he's been employed seasonally on a potato farming operation.

"Right now, my main jobs are storing and shipping potatoes," says David. "I love what I do. But I've been wanting to take a truck driving course for a few years. A truck driving license will allow me to work longer hours. As well, there would be more opportunities for me to pick up other jobs."

David recently answered the door of opportunity that will eventually lead to better job prospects. He took the first step to a truck driving career by contacting **Brian Oulton**, Project Manager with the **PEI Trucking Sector Council (PEITSC)**. Brian arranged for David to go through the industry assessment process which started with the **Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES)**.

"I hadn't written a test since I left school, so I was very nervous," says David. "Brian assured me that it would be OK."

## David recommends assessment process

"I am glad I went through the assessment because it gives me the confidence to take the Truck Driver course," says David. "I recommend it to anyone thinking about becoming a truck driver. It really prepares you for the job, lets you know what to expect, and helps you decide if this is what you really want."



David Victor plans to remain on PEI after he completes a truck driving course. "People ask me if I plan to go west after the course," he says. "But I have no plans to leave the Island. This is where I want to live and work and this course gives me more employment opportunities."

## Assessment process

In 2007, the PEITSC completed a labour market study. It indicated a number of people who took the training to become **Class 1A Truck Drivers** were not going on to employment in the trucking industry for various reasons.

In response to the study, the PEITSC Driver Training Committee designed an industry screening process for people interested in becoming truck drivers. The screening includes an assessment of Essential Skills, review of driver's abstract and criminal record, and a presentation to increase people's awareness of the trucking industry.

## The industry assessment process ensures that potential students will:

- ✓ have the Essential Skills to be successful in their Class 1A truck driver training course
- ✓ recognize the value of workplace learning as well as classroom learning
- ✓ be aware of any barriers to employment they may face because of their criminal record or driver abstract
- ✓ understand the demands and lifestyle changes associated with being a truck driver.

## Public presentations offered

"Though the industry presentation is a requirement for those who will be accessing funding, it is not only for funded individuals. Anyone interested in a career in trucking is welcome to come to the presentation," says Brian.

"Potential Class 1A Truck Driver students who wish to receive **Skills Development** funding for their training need to go through the assessment process. This will ensure they meet the minimum industry standard for employability. If candidates are successful, they will be given a letter from the PEITSC stating they have met that standard."

## High retirement rate

"The assessment process gives employers confidence in new drivers," says **Heather MacLean**, Executive Director of the PEITSC. "This is needed because the trucking industry on PEI is currently facing a high retirement rate."

"On PEI, 26 percent of all drivers are over 55, and 56 percent are over the age of 45. The next five to 10 years will see many current drivers settling into retirement. This, coupled with the growth of the industry, is going to create shortages in the labour market."

## Industry has greater confidence in new drivers

"Once a new driver goes through the process and receives approval, they can be assured they have met the minimum requirements to be employable in the trucking industry," says Brian.

"Employers can now feel more confident that they are getting quality candidates fresh out of training. It can still be a struggle for new graduates to gain employment immediately after graduating. But now employers know that all new graduates have the Essential Skill levels and acceptable documentation to work in the trucking industry. This confidence did not exist in the past."

The PEI Trucking Sector Council is funded by the Canada Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement ([www.lmda.pe.ca](http://www.lmda.pe.ca)).



For more information about the assessment process, contact **Brian Oulton** or **Heather MacLean** at **566-5563**, or visit the website at [www.peitsc.ca](http://www.peitsc.ca) and click on **TOWES & Assessments**.