

# The Employment Journey on PEI

MANY JOB OPTIONS ON PEI

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## Trucking company's growth drives move to a new state-of-the-art terminal

by Stella Shepard

**S**eafood Express (PEI) Ltd., based in Charlottetown, transports goods throughout North America. They currently have 85 power units (truck cabs) and more than 100 trailers.

**Andy Keith** is Vice-President of the company, which was purchased in 1986 by his father, **Bill Keith**, with a focus on transporting fish from the Maritime provinces to Boston. "Back then, the fleet consisted of less than 10 power units, and we have been growing ever since," says Andy.

"Nowadays, we mainly focus on fresh and frozen food products, temperature-controlled beverages, fresh and frozen seafood, medical supplies, and other products and materials.

"Currently, we are building a state-of-the-art terminal in Charlottetown which will open in the spring, 2019. It features a four-bay drive-thru maintenance facility with an indoor wash bay, a two-story office space, fitness centre, and a full driver-training facility."



Conceptual drawing. Submitted photo

### About the staff and hiring needs

Seafood Express employs more than 30 office personnel and maintenance technicians, and more than 90 professional drivers.

"We are continually looking for company drivers for our long-haul and container divisions, as well as local shunt drivers," says Andy.

"Currently, we are also recruiting terminal yard workers, driver trainers, and maintenance technicians to start when we move to the new facility.

"With our growing fleet, we will also be looking for skilled and experienced logistics coordinators to keep our fleet of trucks moving and our customers satisfied. We hire full-time staff, as we stay extremely busy year-round."

### Difficult jobs to fill

"Drivers are the most difficult jobs to fill," says Andy. "With our fleet consistently expanding, we are constantly looking to fill new positions, so we are always recruiting. Being a long-haul carrier, we need the most skilled and experienced drivers.

"To maintain our excellent safety record, we are very selective on whom we hire to drive for our company.

"Less experienced drivers are required to take extended training with a driver trainer to ensure they are proficient and comfortable with our long-haul operations."

Andy says North America is facing a massive driver shortage in the trucking industry, which poses a challenge to all carriers.

### Training available

"We offer on-the-job training," says Andy. "We have a full-time driver recruiter and trainer on-site. We offer a very extensive paid orientation program for new drivers, and we have staff who continually educate and train drivers. Safety is important to us.

"We are consistently educating our drivers. New drivers get a three-month probationary period, where they are assigned to job shadow with certified and experienced driver trainers for as long as they need.

"While we don't have any co-op opportunities available at the moment, we have used a similar program in the past and hired the employee. If we feel someone is a good fit to join our team, we do what we can to ensure he or she can work with our company."

### Transferable skills and educational background needed

"We follow US DOT guidelines when it comes to hiring standards. Usually, we require minimum high school diploma (or equivalent), a valid Class 1 driver's license, clean criminal record, and clean driver's abstract.

"The ability to work as part of a team is a major asset to our company. Seafood Express has a very team-oriented philosophy, because all our departments are required to be in constant communication to keep the company operating efficiently and effectively.

"When hiring, a post-secondary education is always an asset but not a requirement. We focus more on hiring for good character, as we can train and provide people with the skills to work in the transportation industry."

### Is there a need for bilingual staff?

"Bilingualism is definitely an asset," says Andy. "Our fleet runs through Quebec on a daily basis. Also, the ability to speak different languages is a welcome addition.

"We currently have people on staff who speak various languages and we see great value in multilingualism."

### Working conditions

"Drivers are sitting and driving for long periods of time," says Andy. "Our terminal has a lounge for drivers to relax in. It consists of a kitchen, TV lounge, eating area, dorm rooms, available computers and a full fitness centre. We focus on driver comfort, because they are our biggest asset."



Andy Keith, Vice-President of Seafood Express (PEI) Ltd. Submitted photo

### Advancement opportunities

"We are always looking to move our staff on an upwards trend. Whether that means becoming more experienced and knowledgeable in one department, or moving upwards in different departments, we support advancement in the workplace 100 percent."

### Testimonials

"Since we are accredited as an Employer of Choice in the Transportation industry by the Trucking Human Resources Sector Council (THRSC), we can confidently say that our employees have many positive things to say about our company."

### How do you advertise for staff?

"We advertise online through job boards, our website, and social media. We also work closely with job-readiness programs, government assistance programs, and recruiting companies."

### How to apply

"Give us a call or stop by the office to meet us in person," says Andy.

Job seekers can contact **Jeremy Cleghorn**, driver recruiter, at 1-902-566-1102 or email [jcleghorn@seafoodexpress.pe.ca](mailto:jcleghorn@seafoodexpress.pe.ca)

Interested individuals can also call **Andrea Bird**, HR Manager, at 1-902-566-1102 or email [careers@seafoodexpress.pe.ca](mailto:careers@seafoodexpress.pe.ca)

For more information about **Seafood Express (PEI) Ltd.**, visit [www.seafoodexpress.pe.ca](http://www.seafoodexpress.pe.ca)

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