

New HR Coordinator will help address shortage of Truck Drivers

by Heidi Riley

Randy Shaw was hired last September as the HR Coordinator for the PEI Trucking Sector Council. One of his roles is to speak with people interested in a career in Trucking, and helps match job seekers and employers.

He also works closely with industry to help develop new HR strategies and opportunities around everything from immigration and training, to recruiting non-traditional entrants to the industry.

"I do everything from marketing to social media, creating company profiles and posting new positions, to answering inquiries such as how to bring new immigrant drivers to Canada.

"I also help promote the trucking industry and what it offers. I visit schools and make industry presentations to tell students about the good wages, benefits, and lifestyle offered by the industry.

"We are trying to steer away from the public perception of truck driving, because it is not what it appears to be."

Randy grew up in a family that owned a trucking business, and drove a truck on the family farm. He earned a Business Diploma at Holland College, and worked as a Truck Driver to finance his tuition.

"Trucking is a flexible job with good pay. I enjoyed driving to earn a second income."

After graduation, he worked in a financial institution, and then went to Alberta to drive trucks for the oil and gas industry. In 2017, he came back to PEI, worked in construction, and then was offered a job at the Trucking Sector Council.

Visit www.peitsc.ca to find tips for entering the trucking field, including the following:

- Job board listing trucking-related jobs
- Labour market information: explore the industry, the careers, and the training available
- Tips on finding a job in the trucking field
- Job descriptions
- Programs to help new candidates enter the field
- Information about training in Atlantic Canada

For more information or to register, contact the **PEI Trucking Sector Council**, Farm Centre, Charlottetown, at **902-566-5563** or email info@peitsc.ca Visit www.peitsc.ca

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From left, Brian Oulton, Executive Director, and Randy Shaw, HR Coordinator, PEI Trucking Sector Council.

The PEI Trucking Sector Council welcomes people interested in starting a career as a truck driver to attend a **Career in trucking information session**.

The next information sessions will be held at the Farm Centre in Charlottetown at 9:30 am on March 19 and April 16.

Agriculture programs promote farm safety, employment support, and skills building

by Gloria Welton

Laurie Loane, Executive Director of **PEI Agriculture Sector Council**, is proud of all the great work taking place across the Island to promote careers in agriculture and safety on the job.

"We were successful in getting a Workers Compensation Board (WCB) grant last year to develop the first Agriculture Train the Trainer safety program," says Laurie. "We put that on for six weeks with a group of farms across the Island.

"The program was awarded a Special Project National Award and presented at the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering 2019 conference. We applied for another WCB grant to develop the project further, perhaps into videos or an online module with an educational institution.

"This is the first time such a program has been offered. It includes the training procedures farmers should be following, and gives them the ability to take the information and train their staff."

Employment services match job seekers with employers

Agriculture employment services are offered year-round. People can contact **Natalie Li** to post jobs or connect with an employer.

"Our industry is changing," says Laurie. "A lot more crops are growing longer into the season. More warehouses are being constructed, which extends the work season and means jobs can extend for a longer period of time.

"Potato farmers look to hire more people in March and April. In the summer, 200 to 300 jobs could be listed, and there are still a lot of jobs available in the fall and winter. It's more than labour jobs. There are a lot of high-end jobs too, like management and Human Resources.

"With our current demographics, demand far outweighs the supply of people willing to work in agriculture, which is very common now for most industries across PEI. It is important that we talk to students in schools to get them interested in agriculture."

Farm Technician Apprenticeship program

The Farm Tech program is a two-year registered apprenticeship program offering hands-on experience on a farm gaining skills with a farm mentor.

Apprentices also participate in five weeks of in-class training on PEI delivered by instructors from Extended Learning, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture.

The program teaches skills such as crop production, pesticide application, food safety, production of potatoes, forages and other field crops, shop skills, preventative maintenance, tractor safety, communications, occupational health and safety, soil and nutrient management, and much more.

After they complete the program and log 6,000 hours, Apprentices write the Certificate of Qualification exam for Farm Technicians to obtain a Blue Seal from Apprenticeship PEI.

"Farmers are always looking for employees," says Laurie. "The Farm Technician designation shows that they received set training and education that will add to their skill set, which means a lot to employers."

Laurie says those interested in taking the program can sign up at any time. Applications are reviewed by Apprenticeship PEI, which sets up the paperwork and logbooks, which track hours and the skills they must have.



Farm Technician Apprenticeship program participants, facilitator, and sector representative.

Doug Burris from Nova Scotia teaches a major component of this two-year program. "I work for Dalhousie University, which facilitates a lot of this program for the PEI Department of Agriculture."

Kurt Rogers, Apprentice, (sitting on the tractor seat) works for Issac Murnahan in Vernon Bridge. "This is my first year, and the training is going great. The instruction is really in depth yet easy to follow."

Ally MacDonald, (sitting in front of Kurt) works on a dairy farm for Vernon and Bertha Campbell at Mull Na Beinne Farms Ltd. in Kensington. "I grew up in Toronto, but spent a lot of time in agriculture. Taking this program is giving me a chance to be more qualified and will help me gain more experience."

For more information about the **PEI Agriculture Sector Council**, contact **Laurie Loane** at **902-892-1091**, or email info@peiagsc.ca

For the full interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Agriculture**.

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