

AMTA News Page

Alberta's Professional Driver Certificate Program In Jeopardy!

As the result of not being able to include a Class 1 license as part of the training and the length of the course in Alberta's present hot economy, the Professional Driver Certificate Pilot Program offered through Red Deer College and driving schools throughout the province has not been able to attract a sufficient number of students to make it a success. According to Dennis McCarty, PDC Program Chair, "I have talked to many students and companies who want to enter and support the program but when they find out that it doesn't include the Class 1 license and as the result the student is unable to earn a wage for the majority of the 20 plus weeks, they don't sign up."

Dennis adds "Students that we have recruited to the post class one program have been very happy with the quality of training that they have received. Reports that we are getting from the carriers are that they are very impressed with these students and the level of training we are getting through this program and would like to continue taking students from this program".

As the result of the concerns, a proposal was submitted to Doug Horner, the Minister of Advanced Education & Technology, on November 12th, to modify the course to include the Class 1 license and to shorten it to 12 weeks, 8 weeks of theory and behind the wheel supervised driving and 4 weeks of supervised practicum under a company coach/mentor. With the inclusion of the Class 1, the student would then be eligible for Employment Insurance funding, similar to an apprentice program, and an employer would be able to utilize the remainder of the time to provide company specific training and experience. As the result, the student does not have to endure a period with no income and the carrier has a qualified driver after 12 weeks instead of 20.

The proposal was submitted by several members of the transportation industry, the driving schools, the AMTA, and the Transportation Training & Development Association. We have since received a response and it appears that some private driving schools have raised concerns about unfair competition. We are not sure why this is an issue as any driving school can go through the process of becoming accredited to provide the training which meets the national standard for the industry. For the good of the industry, we trust that the Minister and his staff will support the changes and we are asking for your support. It will be a huge step backward in training for the transportation industry if this pilot program fails. Please take the opportunity to express your views to your provincial government representatives soon, as they are in the process of making this decision now! Please send your comments to Minister Horner's Executive Assistant, Jason Krips, at jason.krips@gov.ab.ca