

# **The Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership**

## **Phase Three**

June, 2001



**FINAL REPORT**

## **Acknowledgements**

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The results of the work of the Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership would not have been possible without the participation of many individuals who gave of their time to participate in meetings, work with students, communicate with stakeholders and contribute resources to the project.

Members of the Steering Committee are to be commended for the commitment to the Sector Partnership and for the time and effort contributed to the work that went into designing, developing and implementation the driver training programs.

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## Steering Committee

The following are the members of the Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership Steering Committee for Phase Three of the project. We would like to acknowledge their work as members of the committee; their insights and guidance were much appreciated in this phase of the Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

#### **1.1.1 Phase I Funding**

The Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership (STSP) was established in October, 1997, through funding by the Sector Partnerships Program of Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. Through this funding the STSP conducted a detailed and thorough human resource and training needs assessment study, which concluded with a final report that was released in May, 1998.

#### **1.1.2 Phase II Funding**

Human Resources Development Canada provided funding through the Local Labour Market Partnership Program (LLMP) to undertake implementation of the strategies developed in the Human Resource and Training Needs Assessment Study from Phase I. The project entailed examining in detail the training needs for dispatchers, technicians and drivers.

Highlights from Phase I and II, which resulted from the work of the Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership, are:

- Increased awareness of the needs of the trucking industry in the province through communication, reports, involvement in committee work and individuals and organizations talking and promoting the work of the partnership;
- Improved knowledge of issues that impact the industry, including carriers, the recognized training providers, drivers, government, aboriginal organizations and businesses involved in the trucking industry through participation in work placements, committee work and individual discussions;
- The development of a driver training program which could potentially become the minimum standard for entry into the industry by incorporating components of training programs from Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) the STA and SIAST; and
- The development of a very structured and detailed process for the recruitment, selection, training, placement and employment for new drivers for the industry that is built on participation, communication and commitment.

### 1.1.3 Phase III Funding

Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST) provided Phase III funding to the Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership Steering Committee to implement strategies and recommendations in response to needs identified in the first two phases. The following activities were undertaken:

- In partnership with SIAST, training providers and CSCES centers, deliver and evaluate two driver training pilot programs including co-ordination, recruitment and screening of participants.
- In partnership with SIAST, other training providers and CSCES centers, explore options for the future delivery of a dispatcher training pilot program that will address industry's needs for trained personnel to work as dispatchers including recruitment and retention strategies.
- Continue on-going communications with CSCES centers, training providers, industry and Aboriginal organizations regarding the pilot programs.
- Develop and implement strategies for the continuation of the STSP without additional funding from PSEST.

## 2.0 Report Objectives

The objectives listed below relate to the results of Phase III:

- Summarize the results of the two driver training pilot programs;
- Outline options for future delivery of a dispatcher training pilot program;
- Identify an on-going communications strategy; and
- Develop strategies for the continuation of the STSP without additional funding from PSEST.

## 3.0 Steering Committee Participation

The role of the Steering Committee was to provide leadership and direction to the project. Their expertise and background were utilized to provide insight into the research and processes developed in order to deliver the pilot driver programs. They were largely responsible for giving input and feedback to the pilot program and assess the results. They attended meetings and participated in the delivery of the two pilot driver training programs. The committee also provided input and feedback into the final report. They contributed their time and expenses as in-kind contributions to the project.

Initial carrier involvement and participation was quite good, however, toward the end of Phase III, industry involvement was almost non-existent in spite of extensive effort to retain their participation.

## 4.0 Driver Training Programs

Two driver training programs were delivered and each served as a pilot for the purposes of addressing areas where improvement was needed. STA and SIAST Woodland Campus shared in the delivery of these two programs. Extensive review and changes were made during and following the first program, which was offered during the fall and early winter of 1999. This was in addition to the development of a whole series of documents prior to commencement of the first program.

Trimension Group, under the direction of the Sector Partnership Steering Committee, provided the resources and the staff to research and develop the documentation process and consulted with members of the Steering Committee for feedback and input. The documents that were produced and subsequently revised following the first pilot program could continue to serve as a valuable resource for future delivery of the driver training program. The list of documents developed is as follows:

- Carrier introduction letter;
- Memorandum of Agreement;
- Responsibility sheets for:
  - Employers/Sponsors;
  - Students; and
  - Applicants.
- STSP Overview;
- Advertisement sample;
- Poster sample;
- Information package for use at orientation;
- Application Form;
- Interview Guide;
- Information package on sponsorship for students including:
  - Letter to applicants;
  - Selection letter on behalf of applicants.
- Letters of acceptance to funding agencies;
- Cost/Price list;
- Training information; and
- Verification forms for on-the-job training.

The results of the first program were validated in terms of the recruitment, selection and training by the STSP. The Steering Committee members recommended that, based on the evaluation of the program there was a need to conduct a second program to address those areas where improvement was needed. The members felt that the industry recognized that this program was very near to setting a training standard that would be acceptable by industry and by offering a second program would demonstrate a commitment on our part. This in turn could possibly lead to increased industry buy-in and support for the on-going sustainability of the STSP and having an industry standard training program.

The second driver training pilot program received approval and funding was provided, but at a reduced level to proceed. The program was scheduled to begin in November, 2000, with the in-school portion completed prior to Christmas and the work placement to begin early January, 2001, and completed by early March, 2001. The program breakdown was:

- 7 weeks in school; and
- 9 weeks on-the-job training.

Process wise, the recruitment, selection and training steps that were put in place aided in moving through the process easier for the second program. However, the issue of sponsorship and funding arose which prevented attaining two full courses of twelve (12) each. Some of the factors that influenced the low enrolment were:

- there was difficulty in students being successful in qualifying for student loan funding;
- some employment counselors felt the cost was prohibitive and other driver training programs were available at a lower cost;
- some potential students didn't want to participate in such a long program when there are other programs available that are much shorter in length;
- there were some who applied that didn't meet the selection criteria due to various reasons; and
- there was limited industry involvement in the selection of the students.

Despite the low enrolments, both STA and SIAST proceeded with the in-school portion of the training at the scheduled time. The feedback from them on the revised process, with the exception of the issue over sponsorship was positive. They indicated:

- the carriers were involved in the orientation and selection process, as well as making available placement sites; and
- the recruitment process went satisfactorily.

As a result of the experience gained over the course of the two driver training programs, both the STA and SIAST Woodland Campus have expressed reluctance to continue in the delivery of any subsequent driver training programs until there are substantial changes in the issues around funding and carriers support toward a need for higher standard of training. During the course of the delivery of these programs, both have indicated a significant amount of time and finances were invested that weren't recoverable. However, both parties are open to more discussion on the subject as long as there is any possibility to supply a better product to the industry by way of better trained, safer drivers.

The summary results of the two programs are as follows:

- STA and SIAST provided the formal in-school training for each program;



- A total of 16 students attended the in-school training in which 15 students were successful in attaining their Class 1A license;
- Of these, 14 students went on and participated in the work place practicum with a partner carrier and 6 successfully completed their O-J-T;
- All of the 6 who completed the O-J-T did obtain employment and five did it with their work placement sponsoring carrier;
- Of the 8 who did not complete the O-J-T portion of the program, a number of them went on and found employment themselves either by choosing to go drive with a relative or another driver they personally knew;
- There are also a couple of individuals who did receive their Class 1A license who are still planning on continuing after they have addressed some of their personal matters.

Overall, the two pilot programs did accomplish the original purpose, which was to establish a training program that could be considered meeting the industry standard for entry level drivers and provide employment opportunity to individuals interested in truck driving as a career.

The complete evaluation results of the two driver training programs are attached to this report and can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Key findings of the these two evaluations were as follows:

- Co-ordination is key to the success of the delivery of the training programs. However, it is difficult to obtain funding to offset co-ordination costs. It is found that:
  - Separating out all tasks that are required to implement, deliver and evaluation the program to a number of partners doesn't work;
  - A central secretariat is needed to ensure all the steps in the process that were developed are followed.
- There was a good response from carriers regarding them to act as hosts for the job placement. The ones involved showed a genuine interest. They did hire those students that were at their site for the O-J-T.
- Those students who completed the whole program were successful in obtaining employment and all are working in the industry.
- The interaction between the two training providers (STA and SIAST Woodland Campus) and the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services offices was seen as a positive experience in that it not only aided people to move forward in their career determination, but it also provided an excellent opportunity for the employment counselors to become more familiar with the trucking industry through participation on the STSP. This provided a forum for the training providers (SIAST/STA) and funding agencies to become more informed of the issues and needs of all the partners in the partnership. This was experience that provided for more appreciation of the tasks at hand.
- Funding or sponsorship is an issue in that those who passed the screening process, only a small percentage were able to secure funding to attend the training. There needs to be a way to encourage support for those who want to take the training, who meet the program

requirements, have a job placement and are deemed suitable, but then don't qualify for sponsorship. With the present support being for those who are on social assistance, reach back, employment insurance or student loan eligible, a large market is being missed. There needs to be some way to encourage more tuition paying and carrier sponsorship of new drivers.

- A long term commitment by the industry to only hire people who have completed a recognized training program and, in particular the STSP program, is needed. The industry, despite those supporting the program, in general do not request or inquire as to whether a person who they are interviewing for a job has completed formal training. In many cases, the carriers say they want qualified drivers, but there is a difference of perception or opinion on what makes a person qualified and training is not in large a part of the equation. There needs to be more emphasis placed on the need for setting minimum training standards, but at the present time these appear not to be the case either for the driver or the will by industry to move in that direction at any speed. There is a need to sell this to industry before any progress or advancement is made. More grass roots work needs to be done to ensure there is support by the industry.
- The concept of the driver training program developed by the STSP is good. There have been advancements made and there has been success. The success to date has been a result of the efforts of the STSP. However, due to the lack of participation, the members felt, for the time being, to discontinue the delivery of the driver training program as it presently stands.
- The course costs and course length is a factor that has deterred people from wanting to enroll in the program. With the decision to enroll in a training program largely left up to the client, many prefer to take a shorter program that is available throughout the province and, at a much lesser cost. The cost is a determining factor, whether its emphatically stated or not, and is very often encouraged by the person advising or counseling the client.
- The two neighboring provinces on each side of Saskatchewan have made advances to having an industry standard driver training program. Lessons can be learned from them on how they were able to achieve success. More dialogue and consultation is needed to fully understand how each was able to get where they are today. The STSP has the basis of an industry standard driver training program, what is needed now is to learn from them how to implement the program and make it a success.
- There has been an increased awareness of the human resource and training needs within the industry and the public. The STSP can take credit for much of this through the training that has taken place and the communication that goes on in circles where members travel. The members of the STSP have been good ambassadors and kept a positive perspective on the achievements. The STSP has done the groundwork and there is a demonstrated need, as no one is disputing that fact, everybody truly believes education and training is the way to go and in the end the standard will go up.
- The experience and the results of the work done by the STSP will be invaluable if the time comes when the industry chooses to move in the direction of standardized training.

- Over the past three years, strong alliances have been built amongst the members of the STSP Steering Committee. However, industry participation was very limited and will need to be enhanced if in the future the need for a program of this nature becomes recognized and required.

## **5.0 Dispatcher Training**

Through the course of the project, SIAST researched Dispatcher training in other jurisdictions. There have been developments occurring in Ontario and the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) and there appears to be a move to developing dispatcher training for distance delivery mode. The focus is on improving the skills and knowledge of existing dispatchers, so this approach would appear the most appropriate. Indications are that within a year there could be a program available in CD Rom and Web-based formats.

The Dispatcher Essential Skills Profile and Assessment Tool has been developed by the CTHRC and the STSP will be able to access the report and the assessment tool for future work when it comes to dispatcher training.

## **6.0 Communications**

While there is going to be a deferral for the time being in the delivery of the STSP driver training program, on-going communication with the industry, Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services offices, training providers and aboriginal organizations is necessary.

To support this need, this final report will be distributed. The members of the STSP Steering Committee all have their own network in which to communicate and distribute the report. The process will involve:

- PSEST distributing to their list of people and departments within government;
- Each committee member will distribute to their appropriate partners or stakeholders;
- The STA can communicate results in their newsletter to their members; and
- The report will be provided to the Aboriginal training institutions and the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council of Canada.

## **7.0 Sustainability**

One of the key objectives of this phase of the STSP was to develop and implement strategies for the continuation of the STSP without additional core funding from PSEST. Lack of industry involvement and participation has impacted on the sustainability of the STSP, resulting in this group recommending that its activities be held in abeyance until such time as industry is able to provide a leadership role for implementation of the strategies and recommendations in this report.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

The key recommendation in order for the STSP to continue is to have industry in co-operation with the training providers, namely SIAST and STA, to develop a strategy to sustain the STSP. If this were to happen, the recommendation is then to explore implementing the following strategies:

### **Training**

1. Funding and cost of training have to be addressed to make it more equitable and affordable to the clients; therefore training needs to be subsidized in some form;
2. More education and promotion to the industry on the improvement through training in the quality of good drivers can be more economically achieved through the STSP industry standard driver training program;
3. The driver training schools in Saskatchewan need to work toward setting a common training standard that represents industry's needs and work is needed to gain support from the funding agencies and regulatory bodies;
4. There needs to be some tracking and follow-up with the successful graduates of the two programs to prove the training did achieve the goals of the program and the project;
5. Meetings with Student Loans and discussions have to take place to get the Driver Training Program qualified under Student Loans;
6. Work needs to continue on establishing this Driver Training Program as a certificate program, and also as the industry standard because education and knowledge are too important, no matter where one who graduates ends up driving.

**Partnership Sustainability**

1. The industry needs to sustain the STSP by providing resources and support;
2. The benefits and the achievements of the STSP have to be communicated to the industry and the public;
3. The STSP has to influence change by:
  - Educating the public;
  - Educating the employment counselors and funders;
  - Educating the potential students;
  - Educating the parents; and
  - Working together to make people informed on what the trucking industry is about.
9. The STSP needs to follow what the other provinces are doing in setting the standards and funding and communicate this to the industry and the stakeholders;
10. The STSP needs to continue meeting, whether it is on a regular schedule or on an as needed basis;
11. The Saskatchewan Trucking Association or another entity has to take over the role of the secretariat for the STSP and at the same time review the make-up of the STSP membership;
12. Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) needs to play a prominent role in the STSP because of their mandate as it relates to licensing, regulations and training delivery standards.