

# High Fuel Costs Won't Slow Down Inland Empire Transportation Companies

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., June 7, 2011 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – A 30 percent increase in fuel surcharges has put tremendous pressure on the Inland Empire's transportation companies, but won't stop this industry from continuing to be a top local employer, says Terry Klenske, President of Dalton Trucking and member of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board.

Employers are finding ways to grow by utilizing federally funded On-the-Job Training contracts and subsidized employment programs, administered by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. These help offset the cost of hiring additional employees, particularly mechanics, assistants and loaders.

The Workforce Investment Board has also partnered with San Bernardino Valley College to help fund a training program for much needed diesel mechanics, and is even providing tool kits for students when starting work.

Kenny King of San Bernardino enjoyed steady employment until he was laid off in 2006 and then enrolled in the diesel mechanic training program at San Bernardino Valley College. He was hired after completing the program, but was laid off three months later.

"I sent out resumes and went to interviews, but nothing was happening," he said. King received a call from Dalton Trucking while he was sending out his resume from one of the County of San Bernardino Employment Resource Centers.

"The Workforce Investment Board placed me into a diesel mechanic training program and then helped me get back to work through its subsidized training employment program," King said, now celebrating one year with the company. "I now look forward to going to work every morning at Dalton Trucking."

Mike Siebert, director of maintenance at Apex Bulk Commodities also utilized On-the-Job Training programs to hire support personnel at the company's Adelanto and Fontana terminals. The company hired seven full-time people after the training contracts were completed.

According to Siebert, the County's training funds and hiring support allowed Apex to stay competitive during the slowest period of the recession. "The county's staff helped keep the process quick and simple," he said.

Standards adopted in California through a new Federal Comprehensive Safety Accountability (CSA) program significantly impact how transportation companies operate, maintain their vehicles and comply with federal regulations. Klenske estimates this will lead to a nationwide 200,000 driver shortage as those with poor driving records will be weeded out of the industry.

"On-the-Job Training programs and funding for college training courses will give new opportunities to people who are qualified to become drivers," he said. Klenske plans to hire 24 additional drivers as the economy picks up speed.

"Our County's Workforce Investment Board has effectively utilized federal funds in our region's five highest demand industry sectors, which includes transportation and logistics," said Josie Gonzales, Chair and County of San Bernardino Fifth District Supervisor. "By knowing where to focus funding, and implementing programs that support employers and the workforce, our economy is better poised to grow as the economy turns around."

"The On-the-Job Training program has helped businesses and employees achieve stability despite the obstacles faced by their industries," said Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board and Director of the Workforce Development Department in San Bernardino County. "Our role is to be a resource and support system to County residents and employers."

For more information, employers and job seekers can inquire through the County of San Bernardino's Employment Resource Centers at (800) 451-JOBS or <http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/Career-Centers.aspx> .

**About the Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County:**

The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors. The Board strives to strengthen the skills of the County's workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations. The County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors is committed to providing county resources which generate jobs and investment.

The Workforce Investment Board, through the County of San Bernardino Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, operates the County of San Bernardino Employment Resource Centers (ERCs) and Business Resource Centers (BRCs). The ERCs provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life, and the BRCs support and provide services to the County's businesses including employee recruitment.

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