

May 02, 2022

To: Christopher Nicolson, Pres. & CEO CWSAA

From: Bob Bell, Operations & Maintenance Planning Committee

With the spring 2022 meeting just finished I thought I would write to thank the CWSAA team for a job very well done. A good time was had by all, and it was certainly nice to be back to an in-person gathering.

During the meeting at Lake Louise, I had a number of conversations with ski area operators and staff who are still a bit hazy on what happened to the Selkirk College lift courses, and where the operations and maintenance program is headed in the future and I am hopeful that this message can be included in the next newsletter to hopefully clear up any confusion.

The 2019 spring conference in Whistler was the last time that Selkirk College presented the Lift Courses (Lift 151, 152 and 153) to industry as a classroom / hands-on course.

Since that time the **Lift Courses have been updated, fully focused on Z98 lift code requirements and moved to an online platform.**

There are multiple reasons this change was made.

1. The primary reason for on line courses was to dramatically improve the accessibility of lift course information to ski areas across western Canada through out the year and increase the number of participants. The current online course option allows people to sign up and take the course(s) in their choice of any one of 3 semesters during the year. The courses consist of a series of videos and quizzes that allow them to be done at a location of their choice and in short bites or whatever suits individual needs. A final exam is written online and invigilated by Selkirk Instructors via a zoom link. Upon successful completion of the course and final exam a certificate of completion is issued by the College. **Details can be found at [Passenger Ropeway Mechanics | Selkirk College](#).**
2. Despite past course content in the 2018 & 2019 conferences being condensed into a half day so course attendees could participate in other sessions, attendees still incurred conference, hotel, and travel expenses that limited the number of participants from ski areas. On line courses provided increased access for ski area maintenance staff, and enabled delegates at conference to benefit from all maintenance content without being restricted by courses.
3. In the summer and fall of 2019, we held “live” courses in conjunction with the fall risk management meetings in Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan. These were successful however the reality was that course content plus exam time required was more than the time available to properly teach the material. Additionally, finding times that worked for instructors and course participants was challenging.
4. Although the initial focus for the lift courses was CWSAA members, the online platform makes them available to anyone, anywhere, and it is interesting to note that the courses are now being taken by ski area personnel and regulatory authorities from all across Canada.

While the “hands-on” component has been removed from the lift courses, “hands-on” sessions have always been, and will continue to be, a much-valued piece of the operations and maintenance portion of the CWSAA spring conferences. There is significant organizational commitment and planning each year that goes into conference venue selection and content development to ensure a robust operations and maintenance program is incorporated into conference.

With the continued support of senior management and resort owners we will continue to encourage and promote class room and hands-on educational sessions along with the networking opportunities that make the annual spring conference such a valuable and irreplaceable asset for all conference attendees.

The operations and maintenance planning committee works diligently to develop and provide value added, hands on and classroom sessions. Please send us YOUR suggestions & ideas for courses and hands on sessions that YOU would like to see included in the program.

Thanks from the Operations & Maintenance Planning Committee