

Chinook's Edge school bus driver wins provincial event

Kelly Frere, who drives a bus route in the Penhold community, won the 'Provincial School Bus Rodeo' ahead of 50 drivers from across the province.

Drivers need to qualify at the local level to compete in the annual event in Nisku, which is hosted by the Alberta Student Transportation Advisory Council. Although the atmosphere is lighthearted, the competition requires a high level of skill and the winner is recognized across the province. Kelly also works as an EA at Penhold Crossing Secondary School, as a Senior Driving Instructor for Chinook's Edge, and as the S Endorsement 'Train the Trainer' for Central/Southern Alberta.

"I couldn't be more proud and excited for Kelly, but also for our division. This is the first time a driver from Chinook's Edge has won!" said Corinne Varga, Transportation Director for Chinook's Edge School Division. "This is the tenth time Kelly has qualified to compete at the provincial level and she has placed very high several times in past. She is a very skilled driver and works hard everyday - she is so deserving of this recognition!"

The competition involves an intense written component, followed by a series of technical driving skills. This includes such things as student loading, railway crossings, diminishing clearance, among other challenges.

"Kelly has 22 years of experience behind her, with both Prairie Bus Lines and Chinook's Edge, so we are all very aware of how talented she is," said Corinne. "We are proud of all our bus drivers. They all engage in S Endorsement and other refresher courses, and we hold regular professional development opportunities to enhance different driving techniques. Our drivers are always learning and they are highly skilled professionals. That creates a high level of safety for our students and communities."



Best driver in the province! Kelly Frere, won the Provincial Bus Rodeo in Nisku on Saturday. Although she now qualifies to compete at the International Competition, that event has been canceled because of COVID-19 restrictions. It is anticipated this year's winners will be invited to compete when International competition returns next year!



Provincial competitors: Chinook's Edge had three drivers qualify for the Provincial Bus Rodeo this year. Pictured at the event: Paula Spiller (Transportation Coordinator), Kelly Frere, Linda Drover (driver - standing), Corinne Varga (Director of Transportation), Roseanna Martin (Admin Assistant/Trainer/Driver).