Investing in Workforce Capacity

Objective

Build a workforce of dual-ticketed electrician/heavy duty mechanics to act as first responders during BEV troubleshooting.

Justification

BEVs introduce more complexity in diagnosing issues than is typical for diesel equipment, at least partly because the electrical and mechanical systems in a BEV are more deeply intertwined. Effective troubleshooting typically requires a background in both mechanical and electrical systems.

Comprehensive experts on the BEV can act as first responders to troubleshooting issues, enabling more efficient distribution of maintenance/repair activities to the traditional electrical and mechanical groups.

Implementation

In a new approach, a group of technicians began training as both electricians and heavy-duty vehicle mechanics through the apprenticeship programs at Thompson Rivers University.

The dual-ticketed approach isn't focused only on the battery electric vehicle. The goal is to create well-rounded technicians and avoid them defaulting to their primary trade if they are not directly working on BEVs.

Over the 4-year journeyperson program, technicians rotate through periods working in the mill, working underground installing power distribution cables, gaining experience with the dedicated BEV maintenance team and on a 10-week schooling period.

"What we've learned with BEVs is that the trade-lines are much more blurred than they've ever been before"

Electrical Superintendent

Progress to Date

Currently three mechanics are being trained as electricians, and three electricians are being trained as mechanics in the first cohort of dual-ticketed apprenticeships.

Once fully trained, the six new technicians will form the backbone of the dedicated BEV maintenance team.

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