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Joy Smith Foundation launches trucking industry labour trafficking awareness drive

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By: Mike Thom and Sylvia St. Cyr

The [Joy Smith Foundation](#) has launched a new awareness campaign aimed at tackling labour trafficking in Manitoba's trucking industry.

The campaign was unveiled Tuesday at the Rosser weigh scale during National Trucking Week, with support from the Manitoba Trucking Association and Winnipeg Crime Stoppers.

It focuses on educating professional drivers, vulnerable workers and the public about warning signs of labour trafficking and how to report concerns safely and anonymously. The [Global Slavery Index](#) suggests that approximately 69,000 people are living in modern-day slavery in Canada.

At the centre of the campaign is the call to action: "Know the signs. Report the crime." Manitobans will see the message on billboards, posters and digital platforms directing to traffickingreport.ca, a hub of educational resources.

"We've collaborated with the Manitoba Trucking Association and Crime Stoppers, and together we want to bring this information across the community so people have awareness and also give them an opportunity to reach out if they see something," said Janet Campbell, president and CEO of the Joy Smith Foundation.

"As they learn about these signs, they can go ahead and report it. We want them to call in those tips anonymously to Crime Stoppers, Winnipeg Crime Stoppers. And I really encourage people to do that because I think sometimes people are reluctant."

Aaron Dolyniuk, executive director of the Manitoba Trucking Association, said trafficking harms both individuals and the industry.

"The recent addition of labour trafficking is a significant black eye for us," Dolyniuk said. "It results in untrained drivers, poorly maintained equipment, and a race to the bottom for driver compensation. Unfortunately, the real damage comes at the individual level."

Robert MacKenzie, chair of Winnipeg Crime Stoppers, said forced labour in trucking often goes unnoticed.

"Crime Stoppers empowers the public to be an extra set of eyes and ears — because one anonymous tip can help law enforcement dismantle trafficking networks and protect vulnerable workers," MacKenzie said.

The campaign highlights several red flags that may indicate trafficking, including withheld documents, stolen wages, extreme work hours, unsafe conditions, fear and intimidation, and false promises of pay or opportunity.

"This does affect the trucking industry right across our country," says Campbell. "We are launching it here in Manitoba today. This week is National Trucking Week, and National Trucking Week is really an opportunity to celebrate the industry and its importance in our communities. Individuals are being victimized, and there are vulnerable workers that need to be protected and also the industry itself needs to be protected against this happening."

The Joy Smith Foundation says it hopes the campaign will raise awareness and give Manitobans tools to recognize and report exploitation in the trucking sector.