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## La Grande apprenticeship orientation will prepare workers for jobs with ODOT contractors

Individuals interested in careers in highway construction are encouraged to attend an orientation offered by the Oregon Department of Transportation's Eastern Oregon Regional Workforce Alliance.

The orientation will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday at the Joseph Building, 1106 K Ave. in La Grande. Persons interested in attending the orientation session should call Lynn Trice or Rheadean Hayes at 963-7942 to register.

Skilled highway construction workers are in demand in Eastern Oregon and across the state as ODOT repairs or replaces hundreds of bridges through the \$1.3 billion OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program.

The orientation session will help candidates meet apprenticeship requirements to enter the heavy-highway construction labor pool for private construction contractors across the state.

Those requirements include academ-

ic and skills testing, registration in a job database and viewing an ODOT-produced video that helps to prepare people for a career in highway construction.

The orientation is part of the agency's implementation of its Workforce Development Program, designed to expand the number of qualified people — especially women

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## Women, minorities especially encouraged to attend

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and minorities — available to work on highway projects.

The Eastern Oregon Regional Workforce Alliance is made up of representatives from state, county and city agencies; tribal organizations; local service providers; women and minority groups; contractors; construction firms; and Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees.

"The ultimate goal of the Workforce Development Program is to provide Oregonians with the skills to maintain well-paying, sustainable careers," said ODOT Office of Civil Rights Manager Michael Cobb. "We strongly encourage people, especially women and minorities, to take advantage of this opportunity to develop a career and increase their earning power while helping build Oregon's bridges and highways."

The OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act.

OTIA funds will repair or replace hundreds of bridges, pave and maintain city and county roads, improve and expand interchanges, add new capacity to Oregon's highway system and remove freight bottlenecks statewide.

About 17 family-wage jobs are sustained for every \$1 million spent on transportation construction in Oregon. Each year during the OTIA program, construction projects will sustain about 5,000 family-wage jobs.