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BUSINESS

ODOT sets apprentice orientations

In keeping with its plan to expand opportunities in the highway construction trades, the Oregon Department of Transportation this month will prepare potential workers for jobs with contractors.

The department's Eastern Oregon Regional Workforce Alliance will hold orientation sessions in La Grande, Enterprise and Baker City to help potential apprentices enter careers in the trades:

- La Grande Apprenticeship Orientation Meeting, March 13, 4 to 6 p.m. ODOT Region 5 Conference Room, 3012 Island Ave. Contact number: 541-963-7111

- Enterprise Apprenticeship Orientation Meeting, March 15, 3 to 5 p.m., Prairie Creek Center, 104 Litch St. Contact number: 541-426-3149

- Baker City Apprenticeship Orientation Meeting, March 16, 4 to 6

p.m., EOD Building, 1575 Dewey Ave. Contact number: 541-523-6331.

Job-seekers interested in attending an orientation session should call the listed numbers 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 Oregon Transportation Investment Act State Bridge Delivery Program.

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

Those requirements include academic and skills testing, registration in a job database and viewing an ODOT-produced video designed to prepare people for a career in highway con-

struction.

The orientation is part of the agency's implementation of its Workforce Development Plan, designed to expand the number of qualified people — especially women 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, local service providers, women and minority groups, contractors, construction firms and joint apprenticeship training committees.

"The ultimate goal of the workforce development plan is to provide Oregonians with the skills to maintain well-paying, sustainable careers," said ODOT Office of Civil Rights Manager Michael Cobb.

Cobb said ODOT strongly encourages people to take advantage of the

opportunity to develop a career and increase their earning power while helping build Oregon's transportation infrastructure.

The Oregon bridge delivery program is part of ODOT's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act.

The 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, according to ODOT.

Each year during the OTIA program, construction projects will sustain about 5,000 family-wage jobs.