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**Avakian, Roblan and McKeown highlight career readiness at Reedsport shop class**  
*Reedsport program a direct result of the legislature's investment in skills training*

**REEDSPORT, OR**—Oregon Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian, Sen. Arnie Roblan and Rep. Caddy McKeown today underscored the importance of skills training for economic competitiveness during a visit to Reedsport Community Charter School.

The Reedsport shop class and junior apprenticeship secured \$250,000 of state grant funding to support students and local industries on the south coast. Students will learn maritime welding, general welding and fabrication, and later in the grant cycle, road construction.

**“Oregon’s competitiveness is fundamentally linked to the availability of a skilled workforce,”** said Sen. Arnie Roblan. **“Students in these shop classes are learning skills that we need to support local businesses and economic growth.”**

The tour comes as the Oregon Legislature directed \$2 million in additional funding to career and technical education in its budget (HB 5201) passed late Friday.

**“Hands-on learning helps students gain access to important skills that our community needs to attract and retain well-paying jobs,”** said Rep. Caddy McKeown. **“Graduation rates for students in career and technical education programs are near 90 percent. That’s great for local students and our state as whole.”**

Labor Commissioner Avakian praised the legislators for supporting Oregon business and students.

**“One of the best investments we can make as a state is to ensure that Oregon workers have the skills and tools they need to compete,”** said Labor Commissioner Avakian. **“Because of the support of Sen. Roblan and Rep. McKeown and a diverse coalition of advocates, nearly 90,000 students across 161 Oregon middle schools and high schools now have access to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. I’m thrilled to see Reedsport’s shop class first-hand.”**

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