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## **Oregon apprenticeship programs hit major milestone**

More than 10,000 people are enrolled in Oregon's state-registered apprenticeship programs for the first time ever.

Boosted by a growing economy and a booming construction industry, the total number of apprentices in programs certified by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries has more than doubled over the last six years, jumping from 4,618 in early 2013 to 10,002 in June of this year.

Apprentices are also becoming more diverse. The number of women apprentices in those programs has grown from 293 to 705 over the same time period, while the number of minority apprentices has leapt from 683 to 1979.

Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle applauded the success of Oregon's existing apprenticeship programs.

"Registered Apprenticeships lead to lots of different careers with family-supporting wages," Hoyle said. "In an apprenticeship, you're getting paid to learn. And when you're done, there's no student debt."

"It's great to see Oregonians from diverse backgrounds choosing this path in record numbers."

The Bureau of Labor and Industries currently certifies and monitors 146 active apprenticeship programs across the state. The largest are training programs for carpenters, electricians, and plumbers and steamfitters. Carpenters and electricians are also the two highest growth occupations.

Most of the growth in state-certified apprenticeships in recent years is tied to the revival of the construction industry, which reached a record high of 113,000 jobs this year in Oregon after a prolonged slump during the Great Recession.

Over the last three years, around 85 percent of all newly registered apprentices are in the building and construction trades.

That growth is expected to continue: in the Portland metro area alone, there are at least 80 planned public sector construction projects worth \$7.5 billion over the next few years.

The Bureau has also created new apprenticeship programs in different sectors, like information technology and health care, and expanded its programs for a variety of careers in manufacturing. Those efforts have led to 450 new apprentices over the last two years.

BOLI's Apprenticeship and Training Division Administrator Stephen Simms said that registered apprenticeships are a win for employers, participants and the state of Oregon.

"The apprenticeship model gives employers the ability to develop their own workforce, taking individuals with limited skills and putting them in a one- to four-year program," Simms said.

"The result is a fully productive worker for the employer and a lifetime family wage career for the apprentice, who will contribute to the state's economy."