

Labor agency will help Oregon war veterans find jobs

Community Solutions for Clackamas County has been awarded a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor primarily to help Oregon's combat veterans transition back into the civilian workforce.

The Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) will serve over 480 veterans from Oregon, assisting them with training, retraining, job placement and support services, including counseling.

The grant is good news for Labor's Community Service Agency, AFL-CIO, which will be a contract partner helping to provide services to veterans.

The Oregon State Employment Department also is a partner under the new grant.

Labor's Community Service Agency is a non-profit agency funded in part by United Way of the Columbia-Willamette in partnership with the Northwest Oregon Labor Council,

AFL-CIO. Part of its mission is to help workers who have lost their jobs to plant closures and layoffs get plugged into organizations that will help retrain them for new employment.

The agency has been working under an existing grant with Community Solutions helping returning veterans in Clackamas County find jobs.

"Through collaborative efforts with Oregon's workforce development partners, Labor's Community Service

Agency staff has worked with employees from virtually every craft, every trade and every professional organization represented by a union contract, helping to write appropriate training plans and resumes, solving problems, and answering questions," said Maureen Thompson, executive director of Community Solutions.

LCSA Executive Director Glenn Shuck has made program presentations to union organizations, conducted mailings to distribute veterans program information, staffed informational booths at veterans events and referred veterans to appropriate services.

He also has been meeting regularly with apprenticeship training coordinators and military personnel to help plug in veterans to training programs in the field of construction.

Construction has been the fastest growing source of new jobs in Oregon and entry and journey-level construction trades jobs are considered hard to fill, according to the Oregon Employment Division.

"Apprenticeships range from electricians and plumbers to carpenters, painters and laborers," said Shuck. "Apprenticeship training can provide a path to more stable and better-paid jobs in construction 'careers' rather than simply dead-end manual labor jobs."

Labor's Community Service Agency also has agreed to provide support services for at least 10 veterans and their families through its Emergency Fund.

In doing so, the agency will receive a \$1,500 match from Community Solutions under the federal grant.

The labor agency's Emergency Fund provides utility bill assistance, food banks, legal assistance, crisis intervention, consumer credit counseling and information on local family health programs.

Eligible veterans for any of the services include veterans with service-connected disabilities, veterans who have barriers to employment, veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, and recently separated veterans.

For more information about Labor's Community Service Agency and the Veterans Workforce Investment Program, call Shuck at 503-231-4962.

For more information about Community Solutions for Clackamas County, contact Maureen Thompson at 503-655-8842.

Clatskanie ethanol plant to be union built

Hundreds of local construction trades workers will have an opportunity to put their skills to work on the development of an ethanol plant being built in Clatskanie, Oregon — the result of a project labor agreement reached between the Columbia-Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council and general contractor JH Kelly.

Cascade Grain Products at Port Westward on the Columbia River will be the largest ethanol plant on the West Coast, producing 113.4 million gallons of corn-based dry mill fuel-grade ethanol per year. It will serve markets in Oregon, Washington, California, Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific Rim.

Approximately 70 full-time jobs will be created when the plant opens in early 2008.

Ethanol is an alternative fuel that is considered a sustainable resource, and its production warrants special tax incentives granted through a bill passed in 2005 by the Oregon Legislature.

Berggruen Holdings Inc. of New York owns the facility. Cascade Grain is the first facility in the corporation's strategy to construct a series of strategically located ethanol plants.

JH Kelly LLC Ethanol will self-perform the site preparation; concrete; structural steel erection; multiple structure

erection; tank, vessel and equipment installation; pipe fabrication; and piping installation.

"This project represents more than 400,000 hours and all the work will be performed by local building trades employees," said John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council. "Construction will inject more than \$100 million into the local economy, and those wages will stay right here in Oregon and Southwest Washington."

The project labor agreement ensures that all workers involved in the project will receive health insurance benefits, an employer-paid pension and have appropriate training to ensure safe working conditions on the job, in addition to the wages they are paid.

"We are glad to be working closely with the community on this project and appreciate the opportunity to employ local craftspeople to build this plant," stated Chuck Carlson, president of Cascade Grain Products. "We plan to be a part of this area for many years to come, and supporting working families is important to Cascade Grain."

Construction work is set to begin in August.



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