



Women in Trades CAREER FAIR

More than 2,000 women and teenagers were introduced to careers in “non-traditional” trades such as construction worker, lineman, and firefighter at the 22nd annual Women in Trades Career Fair held May 8-10 in Northeast Portland. Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI) produces the interactive, three-day fair to increase the number of women working in the trades, and to help fill the gap in the labor force that will be created with record-levels of upcoming retirements of skilled trades people. OTI said that women make up about 7 percent of those employed in non-traditional trades in Oregon — which is double the national average. Seventy exhibitors had booths at this year’s fair, including employers, government agencies, apprenticeship programs, and community and technical colleges.

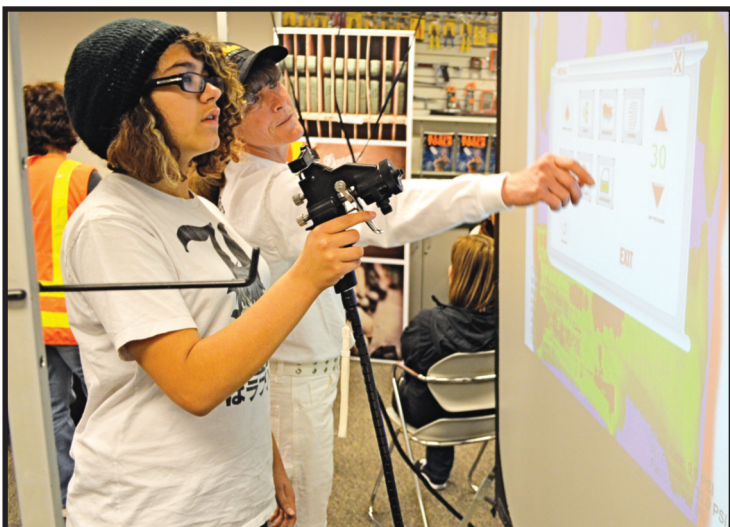


Cristi Sawtell of IBEW Local 125 talks about her job as a journey-level lineman at Bonneville Power Administration at the 22nd annual Women in Trades Fair. Joining her on stage to talk about their respective crafts are to her left: Angela Couture of Iron Workers Local 29 and Carrie Bowers of IBEW Local 48. In the photo above left, Sawtell demonstrates how to safely climb a utility pole.

Allison Craig, a fifth-term apprentice and member of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, demonstrates the basics of welding at the Career Fair. Participants got to strike an arc and weld their initials on a steel plate. Craig, 47, said she first learned about opportunities for women in the trades when she attended the fair several years ago. “It changed my life,” said the single mom. “I’m learning a trade and I’m getting paid while I do it. I just put an offer in on my first house.”



The Women in Trades Fair offered a special workshop for “Fathers and Daughters.” In the photo left, Connie Ashbrook, director of Oregon Tradeswomen Inc, sponsor of the fair, talks about the many training programs that are open to women.



(ABOVE LEFT) Erin Scott (pointing), a member of Painters and Drywall Finishers Local 10, helps a young woman operate a “virtual paint” machine that is used to teach apprentices at the training center. Scott, who previously worked with her husband as a carpet installer, is a 90 percent apprentice. (PHOTO CENTER) Sarah Lapp of Roofers Local 49 explains a single-ply roofing system (TPO) to two participants at the Career Fair, held May 10 in Portland. Lapp, a third-year apprentice, said the state-of-the-art TPO roofing system is energy efficient and better for the environment. (PHOTO RIGHT) A popular booth at the fair lets participants operate a jack-hammer. Helping out is Laborers Apprenticeship Coordinator Aida Aranda (left). Aranda is a member of Laborers Local 296. She has volunteered to help at the fair for the last five years, and says she loves it.