

During National Apprenticeship Week, Nov. 2-6

Apprenticeship gets some long-overdue recognition

Sheet Metal Workers and Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. recognize 'Women in Apprenticeship Day'

The Sheet Metal Institute, Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, and Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI) hosted a "Women in Apprenticeship Day" Nov. 4 to celebrate Oregon's success in introducing women to apprenticeship. The event was part of the National Apprenticeship Week put on by the U.S. Department of Labor to promote apprenticeship opportunities and to showcase to businesses the positive impact they have in workforce training.

More than 200 events took place nationwide during the week of Nov. 2-6, with North American Building Trades unions (formerly the National Building and Construction Trades Council) hosting open houses in more than 15 cities.

In Portland, sheet metal industry employers, union officials, public officials, female pre-apprentices, apprentices, and graduates of the Sheet Metal training program talked about apprenticeship opportunities.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown each issued proclamations declaring Nov. 4 as "Women in Apprenticeship Day."

In Oregon, more women are becoming apprentices

At 6.9 percent, Oregon has more than double the national rate of women in construction trades apprenticeships. According to Connie Ashbrook, executive director of OTI, registered apprenticeship programs in the Portland metropolitan area that her organization partners with have nearly 10 percent women, on average.

"We've got a ways to go though," Ashbrook said.

"Half of Oregon's registered apprenticeship programs have no women at all."

Apprenticeship training is an "earn while you learn" system that offers people the chance to learn from — and work with —



APPLAUDING APPRENTICES. Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 apprentice Lisa Davis demonstrates how to repair a fan motor at the Sheet Metal Training Institute in Northeast Portland. The soon-to-be journeyman was a graduate of Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.'s pre-apprenticeship program before entering the sheet metal trade. She told her story to women pre-apprentices and apprentices, part of "National Apprenticeship Week." In the background from right to left are Connie Ashbrook and Leigh McIlvaine of OTI; Sheet Metal Local 16 journeyman Allie Medeiros; and Sheet Metal Local 16 Business Manager Charlie Johnson, a graduate and former instructor at the Sheet Metal Institute.

trained journeymen. Apprentices are paid at a percentage rate of the journeyman scale, plus fringe benefits. Their wages increase as they progress through the program. The length of training depends on the craft. At Sheet Metal Workers, for instance, it takes 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 800 hours of classroom time to earn a journeyman card.

Charlie Johnson, business manager of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, said journeyman sheet metal workers make \$38 an hour, with "unparalleled" fringe benefits that include a pension and full medical benefits. "I don't think there are too

many opportunities outside the construction trades that offer that kind of income," Johnson said.

Many apprenticeship programs also are assessed for college credit, which can apply toward an associates or bachelor's degree.

Elana Pirtle-Guiney, workforce and labor policy adviser to Gov. Brown, said bureaucrats talk a lot about how to help Oregonians get better training and higher wages without crippling

them with budget-breaking debt that can often accumulate when attending college. "And we know the answer," she said. "We know that apprenticeship programs are the perfect way to do it. We can get people into high wage jobs and into career-path jobs, and anybody can apply. But not enough people do."

Apprenticeship is on the rise

According to the U.S. Labor Department, apprenticeships are on the rise, increasing from 375,000 in 2013 to 445,000 today. By the year 2020, approximately 30 percent of all jobs will require a post-secondary degree or credential. Experts also project a shortfall of nearly 3 million Americans lacking the post-secondary education required to fill these jobs.

Recently the Obama Administration made an unprecedented investment of \$175 million in "American Apprenticeship" grants to expand the apprenticeship model into new occupations and new industries. It's part of the president's challenge to double and diversify the number of apprentices in America by 2019.

The Oregon Employment Department was awarded a \$3 million grant. The money is being used to form Oregon-Apprenticeships in Manufacturing (Oregon-AIM) to aid employer recruitment and create training programs in advanced manufac-

APPRENTICESHIP: DID YOU KNOW?

- Nearly two-thirds of all registered apprentices in the United States are trained in the construction industry.
- Among construction apprentices, roughly 75 percent are trained in the unionized construction sector — known as the joint apprentice training committee (JATC) system.
- Every year, North America's Building Trades Unions and its signatory contractors direct over \$1 billion in private investments towards this JATC system.
- When wages and benefits that are paid to apprentices are factored in, that annual investment exceeds \$11 billion.
- Our unions and contractors operate more than 1,600 training centers in the United States.
- If the Building Trades training system, which includes both apprentice-level and journeyman-level training, was a degree granting college or university, it would be the largest degree granting college or university in the United States — over 5 times larger than Arizona State University.
- If the Building Trades training system was a public university system, it would be the third largest public university system in the United States — almost twice as large as the University of Texas system.
- If the Building Trades training system was a K-12 school district, we would be the fourth largest school district in the U.S., only behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

— FROM NORTH AMERICA'S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

turing.

"We are truly committed to go beyond the talk, and really expand apprenticeship into other industries," said Shalee Hodgson of the Oregon Employment Department. "Manufacturing is where we're starting with it."

Industries that will be targeted to form apprenticeship programs include:

- Industrial Machinery Mechanics (also industrial mobile mechanic)
- Machinists (also industrial maintenance machinist)
- Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic
- Numerical Tool and Process Control Programmers
- Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment
- Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians
- Sawing Machine Setters, Operators and Tenders, Wood

Hodgson said one of the goals is to have at least 300 new

apprentices registered in Oregon in advanced manufacturing occupations over the next five years. In particular, the program wants to create apprenticeship opportunities for women, people of color, veterans, and recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian told the pre-apprentices from OTI that Oregon is renowned for its apprenticeship programs.

"There is nowhere else on earth that you could go to become better skilled in the craft you want than these apprenticeship programs right here in your home state of Oregon," he said, pointing to the sheet metal, electricians, plumbers and steamfitters, and laborers training facilities.

Also speaking at the Sheet Metal Institute were Betty Lock, regional administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau, and Oregon state Sen. Chip Shields.