

Manufacturing Leaders Join Forces with OMIC *continued from front page*

"I think OMIC is going to be transformational for not just Scappoose and Columbia County, but for Oregon and, frankly, for the United States," said Senator Johnson, who has been a strong proponent of OMIC and was instrumental in getting it sited in Columbia County. "We now have academic partners from three universities - Portland State University, Oregon State University, and Oregon Tech - as well as Portland Community College which will be building a physical facility in Columbia County. We have both local companies and global companies."

Johnson explained that OMIC will focus on "industry driven research" where industry identifies specific problems and then academic teams are assigned to do research to try and solve the problem. Johnson used an example of how to drill a rounder hole. "For companies where tolerances are very, very important, they need to know when they are drilling holes, will the drill bit begin to deform the cylindricity of the hole on the 52nd or the 53rd hole. That's important information to know. To drill a better hole is common across many different platforms, whether what you're making floats, flies, or freights, that's a common problem."

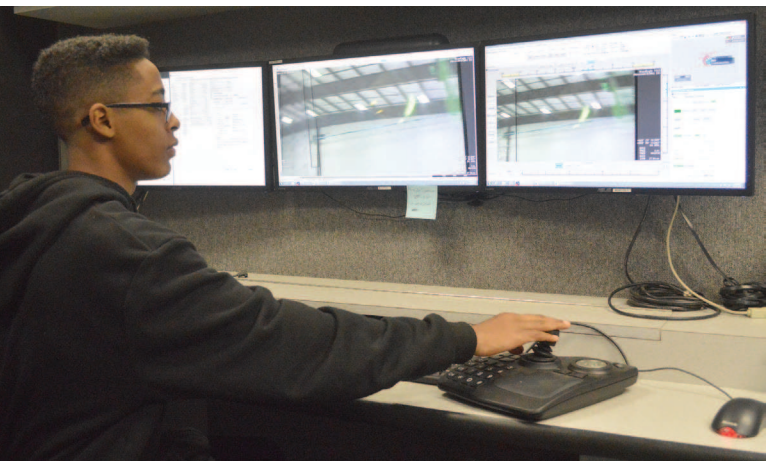
Johnson explained how the whole OMIC concept comes together when students are interning at member companies putting forward industry problems and then using the academic partner research institutions to solve those problems, while incorporating students into apprenticeships that can lead to jobs at those member companies because they are already familiar with the culture and the product line of the company.

Kaitlyn McNaughton is the Director of Engineering and Research and Development Labs with Blount, one of the vendors at the event that is based in Portland and is a partner at OMIC. Blount manufactures chainsaw chains and bars for forestry applications, as well as outdoor power equipment, including a just launched line of professional grade battery powered equipment. Blount also makes farming equipment and concrete cutting equipment.

McNaughton explained how OMIC functions and why she thinks it will be so valuable, not just for the opportunities it offers to Oregon's young students, but to their industry partners. "One of the reasons we joined OMIC is because we're a large manufacturer and the problems and pain points that we have with manufacturing products are similar to problems that all these other manufacturing companies have. So if we go in and do research together and we pool our development funds together, instead of having \$50,000 to put towards researching a problem there might be \$2 million, and we all garner the research solutions. Why wouldn't we want to do that? We don't compete with Boeing so why wouldn't we learn from Boeing in terms of manufacturing and how we might improve."

McNaughton says the other great thing about the OMIC concept is that it creates a pipeline of students and potential skilled employees. "We are developing engineering students doing the research on our equipment at our partner universities, and then we have technical students learning on our equipment at Portland Community College (PCC) who we can hire directly to work in our shop and they already know how to operate equipment that is going to be relevant in our industry. We need people. We need technical tradespeople. We need engineers. We need people with talented skill sets, so this can be a feeding pool to allow us to hire people and it feeds the economy that way, too."

Senator Johnson said that, while the OMIC concept is just taking shape here in Oregon, things are starting to pick up momentum. "Our first inward investment is an international company, OSG, from Japan," said Johnson. "We're building infrastructure and



Students had a chance to learn about the uses of INSITU drone, and practice operating it.

beginning to plan an entire 500 acre innovation district around OMIC. With the team we've assembled and the partnerships between government, business, academia, and even philanthropy, I think this can impact the nation. Boeing has participated in 14 of these around the world, but this is the only one in the United States, and they say it's the best capitalized that they've been involved in."

Craig Campbell is the Executive Director at *continued on page 13*

Whole Body Health is excited to introduce Vernonia's new physical therapist!

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