

# It Takes More Instructors to Resolve the Nurse Shortage

## SB 754 creates incentive for nurses to join faculty, train next generation

A severe nursing shortage is reaching crisis levels in rural Oregon. There's no shortage of interested aspiring nurses, as hundreds have lined up to enter nursing schools across the state. The primary roadblock to supplying the demand for nurses is a lack of faculty to teach those students.

One main reason for the faculty shortage is a significant wage cut that nurses qualified to teach in community colleges – holding masters or doctoral degrees – must absorb to become instructors. In many cases that pay cut can range between \$10,000 and \$30,000 a year or more.

Senate Bill 754 is designed to

help attract qualified nurses to teaching positions by creating a \$10,000 tax credit to instructors employed as nurse faculty members at approved nursing education programs in rural areas. This is expected to encourage qualified nurses to take positions training the profession's next generation, allowing more opportunities to overcome the existing nurse shortage. The bill has passed out of the Senate Committee on Health Care.

"We have had a shortage of nurses for a long time in our community," said Sen. Arnie Roblan, D-Coos Bay, who is co-sponsoring the bill. "Whatever we can do to help qualified people see an opportunity for themselves to teach courses at a community college that will help expand our health care workforce, we should be doing."

Oregon is struggling to keep up with demand for health care profession-

als to provide services to an aging population. It's not going to get any easier, as more working nurses retire every year. The problem is particularly severe in rural Oregon. Aspiring nurses cannot be admitted into community college nursing programs in many cases because class sizes are limited. More nursing faculty would open up more opportunities for students to reach their dreams.

"This is a critical issue for rural communities," said Rep. Caddy McKeown, D-Coos Bay, the bill's other co-sponsor. "Recruitment and retention of health care professionals of many stripes in rural communities is very difficult. As we work toward making sure our aging population is cared for by our existing cadre of nursing professionals, there is a dearth. Our need is especially deep down on the South Coast."

Rural communities in the bill are defined as geographic areas located at least 10 miles from any community with populations of 40,000 or more. The problem stretches across the rest of rural Oregon.

"It is difficult to fill vacant nursing faculty positions; keeping nursing faculty can be a challenge; and work-

loads are typically heavier in nursing education versus nursing positions outside academia," said Laurie Post, Nursing Program Director and Instructor at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton. "When vacant nurse educator positions are advertised, there are very few, if any, applications from qualified masters prepared nurses."

The existing Rural Practitioner Tax Credit – created by the Legislature in 1989 – already provides incentives for a broad array of health care professionals who work in rural areas. Senate Bill 754 provides a similar incentive to entice practicing nurses to go into teaching to train the next generation of nurses.

"We hear how many students are interested in nursing, but the local community colleges lack the space," Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board Deputy Director Kyle Stevens said. "We have a choke point right now. There's just a limit of capacity. All three of our community colleges in the region we serve have the facilities to expand, but they need the faculty."

Senate Bill 754 now goes to the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures for consideration.

## What's Happening at the Vernonia Library

### Upcoming Events

#### Remembering Ring of Fire

Thursday, March 14, 6:30 pm  
Tobie Finzel with the Vernonia Pioneer Museum will lead a discussion on the history of *Ring of Fire* (1961) filmed in Vernonia. History, film clips, stories from individuals in Vernonia during the filming. Both for individuals interested in sharing their experience with the *Ring of Fire* filming and for those interested in learning about the topic.

#### Animal Storytime

Friday, March 15, 10:30 am  
Special animal visitor, stories, and a craft. Led by volunteer Karen Peters. Animal visitors in the past have included a puppy, tortoise, guinea pigs, and lizards.

#### Author Visit by Cathy Lamb

Monday, March 18, 5:30 pm  
Cathy Lamb, who lives in Oregon, will be discussing her writing and reading from one of her books. Refreshments will be served.

### Ongoing Programs

#### Writer's Group

Thursday, March 21, 6 - 7:30 pm  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. For writers with all levels of experience.

#### Book Discussion Group

Special meeting on Monday, March 18, 5:30 pm for author visit with Cathy Lamb.

#### Storytimes

##### Baby and Toddler Time

Mondays, 10:30 - 11:15 am  
Songs, rhymes, books, toys, and bubbles! For ages 0 - 3. Older siblings welcome.

##### Preschool Storytime

Fridays, 10:30 - 11:15 am  
Stories, activity, and a craft. Planned for children up through age 6.

**No Storytime on Friday, March 29**

### Library Hours & Contact

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 - 5  
Tuesday, Thursday: 1 - 7  
Saturday: 10 - 4  
Closed Sundays

Phone: (503) 429-1818

E-mail: library@vernonia-or.gov

## NEXT Renewable Fuels Secures Land at Port Westward

### Signs MOU with unions to construct \$1 billion facility in Columbia County

NEXT Renewable Fuels has agreed to purchase a 25-acre parcel at the Port of Columbia County's Port Westward Industrial Park. The land is zoned industrial and was purchased from Teevin Bros, a local material handling and timber company.

"We are extremely pleased to be working with the Teevin team on our renewable diesel project and happy to have secured the land that will allow us to start filing permits," said Lou Soumas, president of NEXT Renewable Fuels.

NEXT will supply the West Coast with its Advanced Green Diesel, creating emissions savings equal to removing 1 million vehicles from the road. Scheduled to open in 2021, this state-of-the-art facility will eventually employ more than 200 skilled workers on site and will position Oregon as a leader in

advanced biofuels production.

NEXT has also announced they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council (CPBTC) and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters for construction of their facility at Port Westward, an anticipated \$1.1 billion investment.

"We are pleased to sign an MOU with the Building Trades and Carpenters for construction of our facility. We are committed to building in a safe and environmentally conscious manner, and to giving preference to local skilled and qualified labor. The Building Trades and Carpenters bring the highest level of local expertise and professionalism," said Soumas.

"This is a project that is good for Oregon. It will help our state and region achieve important renewable fuel standards while creating economic benefits that stay in the region. We at CPBTC are excited to partner with NEXT to build this project to provide jobs for our members and a clean energy source for the Northwest," said Willy Myers, executive secretary treasurer, Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council.

NEXT and the building trades will now negotiate a project labor agreement (PLA).

### About NEXT

NEXT is focused on the development and production of second-generation advanced biofuels, including renewable green diesel, renewable propane, and renewable naphtha to supply contracted off-take agreements for customers in the western United States and Canada. NEXT's fuels reduce life-cycle greenhouse gas emission by up to 80 percent, improving the environment and moving us forward to a greener future.

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