

# Lee, Honey give update on CTEC at luncheon

By CRAIG MURPHY  
*Of the Keizertimes*

John Honey knows from firsthand experience how having a college degree doesn't guarantee anything.

After all, the former McNary High School principal's son went to college after high school and earned a degree.

His next stop: the basement at mom and dad's house.

"College doesn't guarantee you the jobs it did 25 years ago," Honey said at a Keizer Chamber of Commerce luncheon last week at McNary Restaurant. "It guarantees you a lot of money to pay back."

Honey is helping to set up the Career Technical Education Center, a public-private partnership between Salem-Keizer Public Schools and Mountain West Investment. Honey will be CTEC principal when the school opens on Portland Road in Salem in the coming fall. He is working alongside Chuck Lee, the Salem-Keizer School Board member who is president of the Mountain West Career Technical Institute on Ferry Street in Salem.

Lee and Honey have the shared vision of exposing students to career and technical education. Lee said Larry Tokarski, president of Mountain West Investment Corporation, approached him about a year ago.

"He knew what kids needed to get a job," Lee said. "He watched kids graduate, get good paying jobs and asked why we couldn't do that for more kids. He told me he was starting CTEC. We're been developing this public-private partnership with the school

district since then. It's about preparing students for high-skill, high-wage jobs. This is different than the shop classes we had in high school. This is about exposure to career pathways and technical skills."

Lee said the top jobs available currently are for welders, plumbers, mechanics, machinists and firefighters.

"Mountain West has pledged the facility and will do the equipment," said Lee, who confirmed to the *Keizertimes* last week he's running for a third term on the school board. "People in the business community are excited; the main challenge they have is getting a talented workforce. Hopefully they can attract other businesses to our community."

"There's nothing wrong with a college degree," he added. "But not every kid is wired for college."

Next year's juniors and seniors in the school district are eligible to apply for CTEC, which will begin with two programs: residential construction and commercial manufacturing. Students will use tools and equipment while earning credits towards high school diplomas as well as college certificates and degrees. Students would remain enrolled in their regular high school, with transportation provided to and from the technical institute.

Honey said about 30 students are enrolled so far.

"I could fill the school tomorrow with grownups, because they get it," Honey said. "Kids are starting to get it. We talked to 250 kids from South Salem and will take 75

of them on a field trip. When you walk into the 10,000 square foot manufacturing shop, even empty it's impressive. There will be opportunities not available in our regular high schools."

Honey said students selected will possess strong work ethics.

"CTEC can provide students the chance to earn good wages," he said.

Lee said the vision for such a program has been within the school district for years, but the \$140 million in budget cuts a few years included CTE programs.

"What Larry has done is a great gift to the community," Lee said. "There's no way as a school board we could find the resources to put it together. There are things we're able to pull from the private side. The Oregon Community Foundation invested \$150,000, hoping this can be a model for the rest of the state. This is a test bed."

"We're trying to find the resources to make it happen," he added. "This is a \$14 million project; we've invested about \$7 million so far. I'm looking for contacts in industry, looking for businesses to step forward. A few dollars invested will go a long way towards letting the Salem-Keizer School District invest in this and hopefully produce a quality work force."

Honey is predicting rapid growth for the program, which will add studies including graphics design, aviation and drones in the next several years at the rate of two programs a year.

"We've been talking about



John Honey (left) and Chuck Lee confer during the March 10 Keizer Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon at McNary Restaurant on March 10. The two men are working together to establish the Career Technical Education Center.

such a program for the 31 years I've been teaching," Honey said. "We'll be serving

an initial 180 kids. Five years from now, we will have 1,200 kids. We'll be supporting the

economy, keeping productive workers here in the community."

## Studio M at McNary launches podcasts

McNary High School's Studio M, which provides recording arts instruction for a number of students at the school, has launched a new podcast series.

The Studio M Podcast features interviews with teachers and community partners talking about their passions and

experiences.

The first two episodes are already online and feature interviews with teacher Tracy Rhoades, a McNary teacher who runs the Celtic AWARE Club, and Eric A. Howald, associate editor of the *Keizertimes* and advisor to the school's Write Club.

The AWARE Club focuses on education about human trafficking. Write Club provides a space for student creative writing and publishes an anthology of student work at the end of each academic year.

The easiest way to access the podcasts is by searching for Studio M on Facebook.

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