



Health/Education

Portland Community College Looks to the Future As Winter Approaches, Take Fireplace Safety Precautions



Randy McEwen

Portland Community College has named Randy McEwen as its new vice president of Administrative Services and Wing-Kit Chung as associate vice president of Financial Affairs.

McEwen has served as the college's director of Plant Services

the last two years. Chung, as PCC director of Financial Services.

"I'm thrilled and honored to have been chosen," said McEwen. "I'm looking forward to providing a superior, high-value service to the college and leadership that people feel good about."

McEwen has experience managing large budgets and directing departments. Before his work at PCC, he was with the Fort James and James River corporations where he served in various positions since 1978.

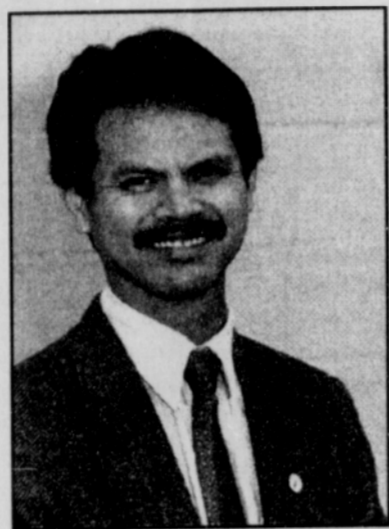
Chung has spent more than nine years with the college after serving nine years at the Eugene School District and the City of Eugene.

He holds a master's degree from Oregon State University and a bachelor's degree from Southern Oregon University.

"I'm looking forward to working in cooperation with Randy," Chung said. "I think we both are looking forward to building a solid foundation for the future."

PCC is the largest institution of higher learning in the state, serving more than 940,000 residents in five-counties.

The college, which enrolls almost 97,000 students annually, has three comprehensive campuses, including the Cascade Campus in north Portland.



Wing-Kit Chung

Now that the cold weather is upon us, more and more Oregonians will be turning to their woodstoves or fireplaces to keep warm. But before lighting the first bundle of kindling, state and local fire safety professional urges you to take the necessary precautions to ensure that a flue fire does not occur.

Every year, fire trucks respond to chimney and flue fires that could have been prevented had the homeowner taken the time to have his or her fireplace system inspected.

The most important step is to clean the stovepipe or chimney before lighting your first fire of the winter. You can do it yourself, but fire officials recommend having a professional chimney sweep do it for you. The cleaning process involves special tools of the trade, such as a wire brush to clear away creosote, the sooty buildup that can ignite, causing the stovepipe or chimney to heat up over 2000 degrees Fahrenheit, starting a flue fire.

Chimney maintenance is vital to a safe woodstove and fireplace operation, and fire marshals recommend that you have your chimney inspected annually to cut back on the chances of a chimney fire. These intense fires can cause much damage, igniting the house inside and out creating enough smoke to be deadly to occupants indoors. If you do not clean your

flue at all, a chimney fire will occur. It will begin when the creosote, which is made up of tiny unburned particles of wood fuel, heats up until it turns bright red. As air rushes in to oxygenate the fire, a loud roaring sound will be heard inside the stovepipe. It may shake loose sections of pipe. Throwing burning particles and flames into the house. Should you experience a flue fire, shut off the air supply to the woodstove, get everyone out of the house and call 911.

There are other precautions to take this time of year besides making sure your chimney is creosote-free. Be sure to dispose of ashes properly, in a covered metal container. You should keep the container outdoors at least 3 feet from anything flammable. Also, keep combustible materials, such as furniture, drapes and decorations, away from the fireplace or woodstove itself.

Using a fireplace screen can also help prevent sparks and ashes from leaping out of the fire and landing on surrounding furniture and carpet. As always, vacuum and test smoke alarms to be certain that they are working properly; it is recommended that you change the batteries twice a year and replace smoke alarms that are more than ten years old. In Oregon, thousands of homes rely on outdated woodstoves or fireplace inserts installed during the energy crisis

of the late 1970's and many of these may not have been installed or maintained properly. In addition to improper installation, these old stoves produce far more smoke and burn less efficiently than the modern certified woodstove pellet stoves or non-woodturning systems like natural gas.

You may want to check to see if your woodstove is a certified model by checking on the back of the stove for a certification sticker from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). If there is no tag, you have an uncertified, high-polluting stove.

Oregon law allows the use of woodstoves, uncertified or not. However, resale or reinstallation of an uncertified stove is prohibited.

Homeowners who upgrade their woodstove should request that the installer recycle their old stove. For information about chimney sweeping and a list of professional chimney sweeps, check out www.ocs.org. For more information on woodstoves and other fireplace products, call the Oregon Hearth Products Association at 503-585-8254, or check out the website: www.ohpa.org. For information on wood smoke pollution, contact the Oregon DEQ at 503-229-5359 or www.deq.state.or.us.

Alcohol, Genetics Linked to High Blood Pressure

For years physicians have known that chronic alcohol consumption can lead to high blood pressure. Now researchers at Oregon Health Sciences University have confirmed another important factor in the relationship between alcohol and hypertension—genetics. "The reason why this research is so important is that high blood pressure has been linked to strokes, cardiovascular disease and kidney disease," said Daniel Hatton, Ph.D., an associate professor of behavioral neuroscience in OHSU's School of Medicine. "If we can further understand this relationship, then we might have a better chance of

understanding who's at risk and how we can treat them. According to American Heart Association, nearly 50 million Americans older than 6 suffer from high blood pressure, which also is called hypertension. In 1997 hypertension was the primary or contributing cause of death for 210,000 Americans.

To understand the relationship between genetics, chronic alcohol consumption and hypertension, researchers studied five different strains of mice. All the mice in a given strain were genetically identical, but each strain was genetically different. By observing these mice, response

to alcohol consumption. The other strains witnessed a decrease in blood pressure in response to alcohol consumption. The other strains witnessed decrease in blood pressure after ingesting the same amount of alcohol; genetics and hypertension can be witnessed in both species. Because 80 percent of the genetics makeup in mice and humans is identical, scientists believe this same relationship between alcohol; genetics and hypertension can be witnessed in both species. "The study shows that individuals can respond differently to given amount of alcohol," said Hatton.



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