

## CASCADE CONNECTION

### Finding Opportunity during Economic Slump



BY ALGIE GATEWOOD

It's no secret – we are living in hard economic times. Unemployment is on the rise, economic growth has all but ground to a halt. Even in Portland, housing prices – for so long a major repository of American wealth – are losing value. And the long departure of good blue-collar jobs to foreign shores continues.

What is a hard-working person to do in such circumstances? It is easy to feel defeated, to look for some subsistence job (or more than one) and ride out the storm. It is easy to think that you don't have any power over the situation.

in good times or bad, than community college. It is a much less expensive option than attending a four-year college or university, and a far more flexible one in terms of scheduling and location. And even more importantly, community college allows you to choose from a broad array of fields for which demand for skilled professionals will only grow in the years to come.

Take health care, for example. The elderly are the fastest-growing age group in the nation, and we are entering the leading edge of the Baby Boomers' retirement. All of

Police officer, medical laboratory technician, forensics, ophthalmic laboratory technician – all these careers are as close as two years away, maybe even closer if you've already got some college studies under your belt.

And it doesn't stop there. Growing fields such as multimedia, video production and website design are also represented at Cascade Campus, as are skilled trades such as facilities maintenance and fiber optics technology. Many of our graduates with two-year degrees in these fields – and a range of other types of degrees – earn good salaries with excellent benefits.

If you're looking for a more advanced degree, Cascade Campus is a wonderful place to start. Lots of our graduates go on to earn baccalaureate and graduate degrees from prestigious four-year institutions.

Yes, times are lean, and the expense of furthering your education can seem like something that has to be put off. I think that's a mistaken attitude. Furthering your education is something that cannot be put off, especially in tough economic times.

So open that door. Take control. Register for the Summer Term at Cascade Campus, and put yourself in a position to succeed – not only now, but for the rest of your life.

*Algie C. Gatewood, Ed.D., is president of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus.*

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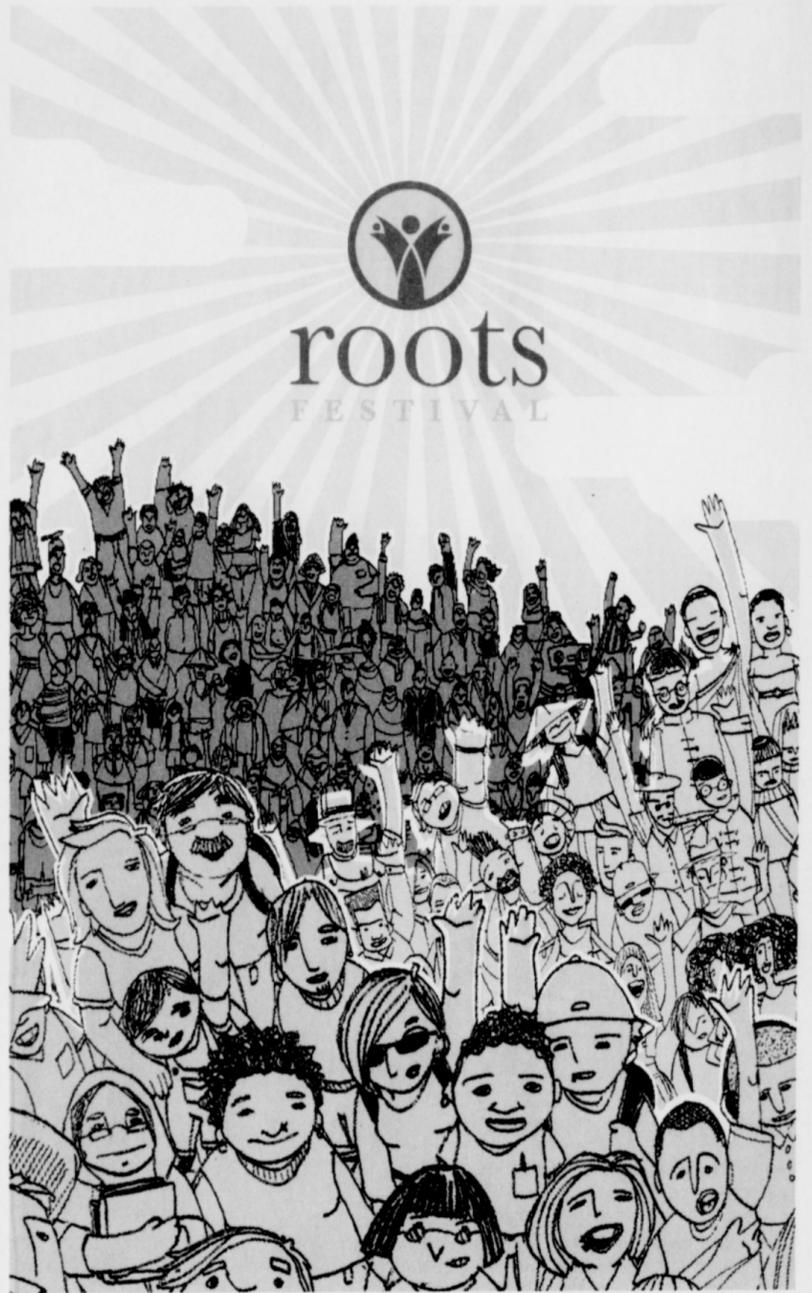
But like my daddy used to tell me back in North Carolina, when one door closes, another opens. Instead of a time of desperation, an economic slump can be a time of opportunity. What better time to take control of your situation, to begin a change of career, to place yourself in a position where you can more easily make it through the next round of lean times?

And what better place to do it than community college? Going back to school in times like these is like buying insurance for the next economic downturn.

One of the best educational resources for working people,

these people will need increasing levels of care as they age, and the people who provide that care will find their services increasingly in demand. Law enforcement is another good example. The same wave of Baby Boomer retirements is hitting the Portland Police Bureau and a new generation of officers is needed.

How does community college fit into this picture? Well, two-year degree programs for many careers in the fields I just mentioned – health care and law enforcement – are available at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus.



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