

# Diversity Wanted in Highway Construction

## Labor Commissioner joins call for new training programs

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries is seeking proposals for pre-apprenticeship services to strengthen the state's highway construction workforce and encourage more women and minorities to pursue highway construction careers.



Brad Avakian

grams—a partnership between BOLI and the Oregon Department of Transportation — will engage students and young adults about opportunities and potential careers as carpenters, cement masons, ironworkers, laborers, operating engineers, or painters.

“Students can build a great career in the highway construction trades,” said Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian. “We want to ensure that all Oregonians—including women and minorities—have access to the skills and tools necessary to have a fair shot at a

well-paying, family wage job.”

The effort seeks to communicate career opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups and create a support system for them to succeed in apprenticeship, especially during the first year of training. Career camps for students will be included in the programs. In addition, winning proposers will develop career guidance for those interested in highway construction trades and pre-employment counseling for graduates.

During the past legislative session, Sen. Chip Shields, D-Portland,

and other legislative leaders helped passed Senate Bill 831A, which directs ODOT to spend up to \$2.1 million of federal funds on construction workforce diversity and pre-apprenticeship training programs for women and minorities. The bill also provides resources for supportive services that remove barriers to participation.

Successful proposers will start their 18-month programs on Jan. 1. The Request for Proposal (#107-1509-13) is available on the Oregon Procurement Information Network website.

## Not the Start, but the Completion Pledge to finish degree

Statistics show the surest way for anyone to land a job in their chosen field is to finish college and earn a degree or certificate.

And that's exactly what students at Mt. Hood Community College are promising to do— signing a mass pledge to



Sule Whitlock

complete their associate degrees or certificates before leaving community college to transfer to a four-year college or enter the job market.

MHCC employees have also been asked to sign the pledge, committing themselves to doing whatever they can to facilitate completion of student credentials.

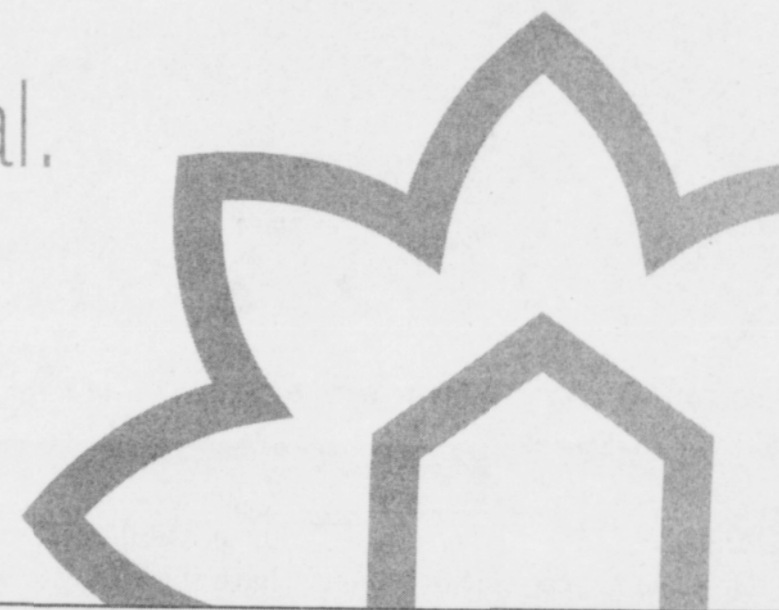
Students gathered on this first week of fall term to sign the completion pledge, part of a national community college movement. The event was hosted by the college's Rho Theta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

“Having students commit to their goals in writing helps motivate the student to take action. Retention is key,” said Sule Whitlock, MHCC student and Rho Theta president.

At the 2010 White House Summit for Community Colleges, President Obama called for community colleges to produce an additional five million degrees and certificates in the next 10 years, part of a goal to restore the United States as the world's leader in college graduates. The U.S. is now ranked 16th among industrialized countries in the percentage of citizens holding higher education credentials.

Studies show that students who complete their degrees or certificates will earn an average of \$500,000 more over the course of their careers.

We're in the business of providing hope, access and potential.  
Join us.



**H**ome Forward (formerly the Housing Authority of Portland) provides shelter and support for our neighbors in need. Because with the essentials of a home, individuals can move forward in life. Today, we are more committed than ever to serving our community of Multnomah County by providing **hope, access, and the potential for a better tomorrow.**

To achieve our goals, however, requires the help of our business partners. We frequently have contract opportunities—particularly for **minority, women-owned and emerging small businesses**—in the following areas:

- Professional Services
- Construction Services
- Social Services

Contact Home Forward for more information or to learn about specific opportunities, or for information about resources such as free training, technical assistance, and workforce hiring and training programs.



homeforward.org

Berit Stevenson  
Procurement and Contracts Manager  
berit.stevenson@homeforward.org  
503.802.8541