

## DATA: Program helps students build contacts with companies looking to hire

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for jobs as data center technicians.

The program, which currently holds its classes at BMCC's Hermiston campus, was positively received in its first year. Instructor Pete Hernberg said at least 12 of the 14 graduates went on to secure jobs or paid internships. Now in year two, Hernberg said demand for technicians is only getting stronger as the industry continues to grow.

"So much of our software lives in the cloud now," Hernberg said. "What we're really talking about is the software being run and hosted somewhere in a data center." To get an idea of that growth, Hernberg said large data centers require "tens of megawatts" to power tens of thousands of servers. The Semiconductor Industry Association, a trade group based in Washington, D.C., has reported that computers will outpace global energy production by 2040, based on current trends.

BMCC developed the technician training program in partnership with a local employer, though Hernberg couldn't specify due to a nondisclosure agreement with the company.

"We developed this program so that we could train students to meet the extraordinary demand in the industry," Hernberg said. "I don't know of any other similar program in the area."

Kim B. Puzey, general manager at the Port of Umatilla, said there are now five data centers either operating or under construction at McNary Industrial Park. Gary Neal, general manager at the Port of Morrow, said they have four centers operating with two more under development. Both were bound

by the same nondisclosure agreement.

However, a search of Morrow County tax records shows the centers are owned by Vadata, which is a subsidiary of Amazon. Data specialist RackSpace owns two other lots near Boardman, but they have yet to be developed.

Steve Meyers, spokesman with Umatilla Electric Cooperative, said they have upgraded the electrical substations at both ports to handle the increase in power loads. Data centers got another break in 2015 when the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 611, which changed how companies were previously taxed on their brand value and other intangibles.

Neal said he expects data centers to continue showing interest in the region, and is excited to see BMCC's new program fill that niche.

"I think it's going to be a tremendous opportunity for people who sign up and go through the class," Neal said.

In addition to attending their regular classes, students in the technician program operate a free computer repair clinic on Fridays as a service to the college. Hernberg said fixing PCs is not too different from the servers inside a data center.

Hernberg said the program not only prepares students for the technical elements of the job, it helps them build contacts with companies looking to hire. A starting technician can make more than \$20 per hour, he said.

"My goal has always been to get our students good jobs," he said.

Charnellus Massey is one of those students who graduated from the program in its first year. The 32-year-old had previously worked as a manager for GameStop

in Hermiston before he stumbled across the class on BMCC's website.

Massey said he's been taking apart and building computers since he was 10 or 11 years old, and wanted to go back to school so he could pursue a career in information technology. After completing the program, he landed a paid internship at a local data center that turned into a full-time position after a few months.

"The demand is really high right now," Massey said. "This area is just really expanding. There are more and more (data centers) coming in on a yearly basis."

Massey said the class was like a year-long job interview, networking with potential employers. He now works 60 hours per week monitoring and repairing servers, and enjoys the hands-on aspect of the job.

"You just have to make sure you're confident in what you're doing," he said.

Taylor Nedrow, 21, was also drawn to the class for its real-world applicability. He moved to the area from Salem this year to take advantage of gaining practical job experience.

Like many others, Nedrow said he's using the cloud more and more as part of his daily life.

"People like to talk about the cloud like it's some mystical thing. It's not. It's a computer, somewhere," he said. "Someone has to be working on it, and making sure it's running."

BMCC plans to shift the data center program to its new Workforce Training Center in Boardman after the facility opens late next year.

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## PARKS: Hermiston delaying skate park construction while the law is debated

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that employee in court and possibly forced to pay for negligent actions they took while on the clock.

The ruling affected communities across the state and how they approached their parks.

Urged by the its insurance company to evaluate its safety procedures and parks system, Pendleton ended up closing playgrounds at Aldrich Park, Vincent Park and May Park in June.

Built in the 1950s, Pendleton Parks and Recreation Director Donnie Cook said the play equipment at those parks was simply too old to use.

"You can't say we didn't get our money's worth," he said.

Already on the lookout for potential risks, Cook said park staff are being extra cautious after the ruling, taking more pictures, placing more barriers and signs when they notice something that could cause harm.

"The risks aren't just a hole in the park or a bad playground," he said. "They come in all shapes and forms."

Pendleton city staff don't plan on closing any other



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

An orange fence blocks ditch access to an irrigation system at Community Park in Pendleton.

playgrounds or parks.

Across Umatilla County, Hermiston has no immediate plans to close any parks or remove any equipment.

Hermiston Parks and Recreation Director Larry Fetter said he's taking a "wait and see" approach while the issue is sorted out.

"It's not unusual to see the pendulum swing one way before it swings the other way and corrects itself," he said.

Hermiston isn't completely unaffected by the ruling.

The city decided to delay construction of a planned skate park while the law is debated at the state level.

One group taking part in

that debate is the League of Oregon Cities.

League lobbyist Scott Winkle said the member organization will try to convince the Oregon Legislature to pass a bill that will expand recreational immunity to include employees and general contractors.

Between cities, counties, park districts and schools, Winkle expects a large coalition behind changing the law and the league has already been in contact with legislators about the issue.

The Legislature's next session starts Feb. 1, 2017.

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## DNC: Three of Oregon's 13 superdelegates have endorsed Bernie Sanders

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gates are pledged to Sanders, who won almost 57 percent of the vote during the state's primary election in May.

Oregon was also to take the national spotlight Monday evening, when U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and state House Speaker Tina Kotek address the convention along with Sanders, Michelle Obama and Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

Oregon state Rep. Shemia Fagan, a pledged Clinton delegate, said Wasserman Schultz's resignation should help bring Sanders' supporters back into the party's fold.

"They just want their candidate to be given credit for the impact he's had on the Democratic Party,"

Fagan said. "It helps them feel like they were heard and like someone was held accountable, so I'm really optimistic about party unity ... This convention isn't about Debbie Wasserman Schultz. It's about defeating Donald Trump."

Oregon also has 13 superdelegates, a term for those who are free to vote however they please — a powerful role that Sanders supporters failed to get abolished Saturday during a DNC meeting but instead reached an agreement to scale back their influence in future elections.

Three of those 13 superdelegates — Merkley, Lupita Maurer and Larry Taylor — have endorsed Sanders, while nine are backing Clinton. The

only uncommitted superdelegate is U.S. Rep. Peter Defazio, whose staff has not responded to AP's several requests for comment since late last week.

Taylor, an outspoken critic of the superdelegate system, said Wasserman Schultz's resignation was a good step toward party unity. But "if they would start putting people in places at the DNC that conducted themselves with some kind of integrity, that's what they need to do," he said.

## COSSACKS: Must complete one-year apprenticeship to join

Continued from 1A

decidedly ground bound, although no less entertaining.

Performing in front of a few dozen people by the Pendleton Convention Center Saturday, the Cossacks contorted themselves into pyramids and blossoms, all on the backs of moving motorcycles.

Started in 1938, the Cossacks were named after the Russian cavalry famous for their horsemanship. Today, they have 14 active members that perform 20-30 shows a year across the country.

The Seattle Cossacks are a nonprofit organization, and its members work in fields like law enforcement and education when they're not doing handstands on moving motor bikes from the 1930s and 1940s.

The Cossacks maintain their bikes and travel at their own expense, and whatever money they get from their performances goes back into operations or a charity.

"What does it take to become a Cossack?" said member Todd "Mr. T" Tressler during the show. "First you have to be crazy enough to build a bike like this and have someone walk all over it."

With his long, wispy beard and exuberant personality, it's hard to miss Andrew Nicholson among the performers.

A longtime Boeing employee, Nicholson said he treats Cossack performances like vacations, the smiles from the crowd enough compensation to keep on going.

Even though the Cossacks aren't seeking a fortune for their talents, the threshold to join their ranks remains high.

Prospective Cossacks have to audition and complete a one-year apprenticeship to earn a spot on the team.

Even then, if the apprentice doesn't get 100 percent support from the Cossack membership, they'll have to try again. Anything less than a unanimous vote the second time around means the applicant is barred from trying out again.

Although Saturday's performance went without a hitch, that doesn't mean the Cossacks don't take their fair share of bumps and bruises.

"There's only two kinds of bikers in this world," Tressler said. "Those that are down and those that will be down. And we've been down a lot."

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