

TERO holds on-campus heavy equipment operator training

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

The Tribal Employment Rights Office’s newest offering might remind some of a simulated high school driving course.

It is an onsite heavy equipment operator training in a portable classroom on the Tribal campus. The Tribe is partnering with Baker Technical Institute to bring the training, designed for beginners or experienced operators who want to train on graders, bulldozers, excavators and wheel loaders.

Participants spend 15 days learning on high-tech CAT simulators before testing their skills on real equipment for five days.

TERO Compliance Officer Duke Kimsey learned about the program through his contacts with the Umatilla Tribe.

“We have 11 road construction projects and need people who know how to operate heavy equipment,” he said. “I picked eight people who have been with TERO for a few years and want to move up in the ranks, and whom it would benefit most.”

Kimsey works with hundreds of contractors and sends out regular reports, so he sees where construction crews are lacking personnel.

“Knowing how to operate heavy equipment is a good tool for them to have in their belt in order to move up to a higher position,” he said.

TERO was formed to provide



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Above, Collins Hinch, Inuit, from Oregon City operates an excavator simulator during TERO heavy equipment operator training in a trailer provided by Baker Technical Institute on Friday, Nov. 2.



Richard Nevarez, Walker River Paiute, from Portland uses a road bulldozer simulator during TERO heavy equipment operator training in a trailer provided by Baker Technical Institute on Friday, Nov. 2.

quality services for the Grand Ronde Reservation and surrounding region to employ Indian people. It achieves this through increasing and enhancing employment opportunities, and promoting Tribal and Indian preference in contracting and subcontracting.

Baker Technical Institute is based in the eastern Oregon town of Baker City and offers students

the training needed to learn job skills such as welding, engineering, nursing and construction.

“This training gets the students familiar with all four pieces of equipment, so when they complete

the class they are more than ready to go into the field and run it,” Kimsey said. “It would be beneficial to have this training every year. My goal is to get them on a piece of machinery, which is much better than digging ditches and has great pay.”

Richard Nevarez, Walker River Paiute, decided to participate in the class to increase his employment opportunities.

“If I have these skills in my toolbox, I could hop on a piece of equipment if needed and work my way into a job,” he said.

The Portland resident commutes up to four hours per day to attend the training, but feels it is well worth the drive.

“I am very thankful and appreciative to TERO for providing this opportunity to better my skills and excel in the workforce,” he said.

Collins Hinch, Inuit, said he has been interested in learning how to operate heavy equipment for some time.

“I always knew there was more to it, but didn’t realize they had classes like this,” he said.

Hinch, of Oregon City, also has a long commute to the classes, but like Nevarez feels it is worth it.

“I am learning there is a lot of detail to this,” he said. “But it is also a lot of fun. The most fun part so far is actually using the simulator after the safety checks. It is great training.” ■

Social Services has bike helmets

The Tribe’s Social Services Department has bicycle helmets available for distribution. Those needing a helmet should visit the department and sign a helmet application, as well as get fitted.

For more information, contact Social Services at 503-879-2034. ■

Author holding book launch party

SILETZ – Grace Elting Castle will hold a book launch party at the Tribal Community Center on Government Hill in Siletz from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1.

Castle’s book, “A Time to Wail, An Indian Country Novel,” is her debut novel. The story is set in 1970s Siletz with some of the early reservation history included as the Native American female protagonist tries to solve the mystery of who is raiding Tribal burial sites, who killed her aunt years ago and how will she ever cope with the recent loss of her teenage son.

The free event will include fry bread served by the “Best of the Rez” women, who are cousins of the author.

Copies of the book will be available at the event for \$17.50, as well as available on Amazon.com. For more information, contact Castle at grace@graceeltingcastle.com. ■

CTGR TERO Announcement

OSHA

10-hour training & certification

Dec. 3 -Dec. 4

7:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

CTGR Employment Service Center
(Building C)

Registration is limited

No cost for CTGR Tribal members and \$75 non-Tribal members

Register with the TERO office by calling 503-879-2188 or

Email - TERO@grandronde.org

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