

TRAINING from page 1A

This mobile operator training platform is equipped with the latest technology to train heavy construction equipment such as dozers, graders, wheel loaders and excavators.

This week, BTI Lead Instructor Brody Charpiloz returned to Florence to train students using actual heavy equipment to demonstrate the students' skills. This was the final step in earning a certificate of completion, which certifies the training levels for each piece of equipment once students reach the minimum operating standards.

Joy Koenig, the principal of Three Lakes, Riverside, Ocean Dunes and Ponderosa Creek High Schools, works closely with Camp Florence staff and believes there is a benefit to students and employers from the BTI training.

"Our students at Camp Florence are given opportunities to highlight their strengths and develop their curiosity about various careers. This began with a simulation training which lasted for two weeks in April," Koenig said. "Indeed, every chance we get, we look for medium- to high-wage skills where our students can learn, be curious, be inspired and have hope. This is the right work to do and we're glad BTI is partnering with us."

The practice site for the heavy equipment training was across from the Florence Events Center on Quince Street, which was suggested by Florence Public Works Director Mike Miller.

Here, students were able to get hands-on practice in a real-life setting.

"What a great program and opportunity for the young adults from Camp Florence," Miller said. "After several weeks of classroom and simulator training, having hands-on practical training in the operation of the equipment is really fantastic."

Miller had the opportunity to meet the students and the instructor on Tuesday.

"You should have seen the smiles on the students' faces. These are skills that will stay with the, as they forge a new direction," Miller said. "The best part of the training is that, once they successfully graduate from the program, they will have certification on the operation of each machine. Operation of equipment is a high demand area for employment and should provide these individuals a great opportunity."

A new obstacle to the learning process at Camp Florence has been the COVID-19 pandemic. The close physical contact during training presents health concerns, most of which have been rec-

ognized and addressed. Clear-cut strategies for dealing with the virus put forth by the Oregon Health Authorities are being incorporated into new OYA policies, as all residents and staff are in confined spaces.

These protocols are essential in the effort to keep the camp residents and the local community safe from exposure to the virus.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, OYA has put in place new procedures to protect youth and staff in OYA facilities, including protocols for cleaning and disinfection, use of face coverings, physical distancing and education on health guidelines.

Another challenge is the current racial unrest reverberating across the nation.

In response to recent race-related turmoil, OYA Director Joe O'Leary and Deputy Director Nakeia Daniels released a statement expressing understanding to the young men — many of whom have experienced racial animosity.

"First, we want to say to our friends, coworkers and youth of color: we know you're hurting. Every time there's a racially charged incident or senseless police killing, such as that of George Floyd, it brings up the trauma of blatant and cruel racially motivated encounters you or your loved ones have had," stated OYA. "You worry that it might be your brother,

sister, wife, child or you who is the next one to be victimized.

"It brings up the frustration you feel that when you share your experiences of oppression and systemic racism, and they are routinely denied, minimized and ignored ..."

The letter from OYA continued by recommending staff and residents read a recently published op-ed piece in the *L.A. Times* written by NBA Hall of Fame athlete and noted African-American historian Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. They included this excerpt from Abdul-Jabbar's article in the email to staff and youth:

"The Black community is used to the institutional racism inherent in education, the justice system and jobs. Even though we do all the conventional things to raise public and political awareness ... the needle hardly budge," he wrote.

Despite the challenges Camp Florence has been facing, Koenig said staff and students are committed to finding solutions together.

"This result is a collective effort — and it is fantastic," said Koenig. "To be able to serve students in this capacity is one of the greatest joys of my job, and I am proud to be a part of the positive work we are doing to reach and inspire our students through mutual respect and civility."

TESTING from page 1A

According to LCPH, "La prueba es para personas latinas con o sin síntomas de COVID-19. Es totalmente gratis pero si tiene seguro médico, lleve su tarjeta. Todos son bienvenidos a tomar la prueba, sin importar su estatus migratorio. Las primeras 50 personas recibirán un pequeño obsequio. Tendremos un intérprete de lengua Mam." Everyone is welcome to take the test no matter their immigration status.

The third COVID-19 testing opportunity will be next Wednesday, July 1, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Florence Food Share, 2190 Spruce St. This test is open to public.

All tests are offered free from LCPH, which is partnering with Head Start of Lane County. It is not required, but people can bring their health insurance card. Most test results will become available after 48 hours.

On fliers for the three Siuslaw events, LCPH offers the following information:

Why is it important to test for Covid-19?

- Prevent the Spread
- Testing will help understand what COVID-19 looks like in our community and help prevent further outbreaks.
- Know for Certain
- COVID-19 symptoms can look different for different people. Some people may not have symptoms at all. The only way to know for certain is to do a test.
- Protect Those Around You
- COVID-19 spreads between people in close contact. One way to help protect yourself and those around you is to test to know if you have the virus.

"Regardless of the test results, continue to practice good hand washing and social distancing," the flier concludes.

This is echoed by Siuslaw

Vision Coordinator Stephanie Sarles, who reminds the community, "Don't wait if you have symptoms — please contact your doctor or PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center at 541-997-8412."

In a release from Tuesday at 1 p.m., LCPH stated this testing is a way that it can "better understand how COVID-19 is moving through rural communities and provide a low-barrier testing option."

Testing will be open to all community members, but priority will be given to individuals in high-risk groups, first responders, individuals who have not been able to maintain phys-

ical distancing throughout the outbreak (having had to work, etc.), and individuals who are symptomatic.

All test results and personal medical information is confidential and will not be shared. If an individual tests positive, they will be contacted by LCPH with the contact information they share.

Additional information is available through www.lanecountyor.gov or by calling LCPH Communicable Disease at 541-682-4041.

For Spanish speakers wanting more information on COVID-19, visit www.lanecountyor.gov/sobreCOVID-19.



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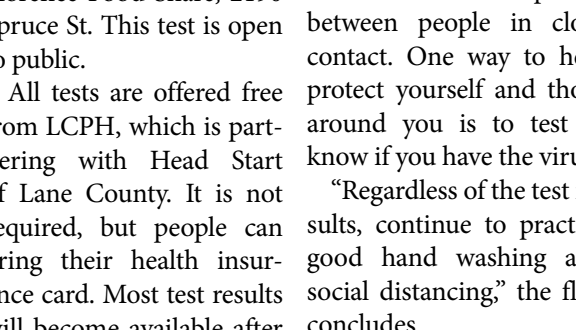
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