

Learning at the Port

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

For the past week, teachers from Umatilla and Morrow counties have been getting used to a different kind of classroom — work sites and factories at the Port of Morrow.

As part of a teacher externship sponsored by the Port, five high school teachers from the area shadowed Port of Morrow employees, heard from speakers at businesses around the port, and toured several facilities in Boardman.

The two-week program is aimed at teachers from math and science disciplines, as well as counselors and career advisers, to bring information about local jobs and trade schools back to students.

“I’d say most teachers feel pretty comfortable about the four-year college path,” said Tyler Davis, a math teacher at Stanfield Secondary School. “But when students are curious about a tech or a trade school program, I know they’re there, but I don’t know specifics.”

The teachers spent three

days last week in Portland, visiting a carpenters union and a sheet metal union, and job-shadowing construction companies. They returned to Boardman on Thursday, and spent the day at Lamb Weston, observing different aspects of operations at the factory.

On Monday, they spent the morning with Jacob Cain, a Port of Morrow civil engineer, and Miff Devin, the Port’s water quality manager. Teachers asked them about how they got their jobs, common openings at the port, and apprenticeships and internships that students can seek.

“I think this helps local youth find out there’s jobs locally,” Cain said. “If they’re not cut out for a four-year degree, it can be a lot easier with teachers knowing that.”

Cain said there’s a need for electricians and project surveyors in the area.

“You can start low and work your way up,” he said.

After a discussion with Cain and Devin, the teachers went on a tour of Port facilities, observing processing plants, grain elevators and vacant lots being

graded for future development. They drove by several Amazon data centers and the cold storage facility, and discussed the job opportunities for recently graduated students at many port businesses.

“I’m glad to know what all these buildings are,” said Rhonda Brennan, a science teacher at Riverside High School in Boardman. “Kids don’t pay attention — it’s their phone and their friends. Now, if we’re going somewhere, I can say, this place here, you can get a job.”

The teachers all noted the shift since they were teens, from manual labor to more technology-oriented jobs.

“There may be a few less jobs because of technology,” said Cain. “But the workforce is expanding. Technology is creating different types of jobs.”

Davis said he looked at the experience as a way to help kids see the wealth of options available to them.

“We asked them a lot of questions so we can know how to help kids if they don’t want to do a four-year degree but don’t want to do an entry-level job for the rest of (their) life,” he said.

PENDLETON BIKE WEEK IS A BLAST



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Straddling his 2018 Harley-Davidson Softail Heritage, Richard Brittain of Umatilla was all smiles during Pendleton Bike Week. Although there’s plenty of room for his wife, Kathy, she prefers to hop into her F-150 pick-up. “I follow them,” she said. “Those guys like to take day trips and sometimes they like doing poker runs and the Echo Toy Run. They ride and I just follow along.”

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