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Community colleges celebrate CTE Month in February

SALEM, Ore. – Oregon community colleges will raise awareness of and advocate for career and technical education (CTE) programs throughout the month of February in honor of National CTE Month. CTE programs at community colleges play a critical role in putting Oregonians back to work as the state's economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community college CTE programs are customized to meet the unique needs of their surrounding communities. Because of this, community colleges are well-positioned to ensure the workforce receives the necessary skills and training essential for reinvigorating Oregon's businesses and industries and filling key unfilled positions. According to a 2018-19 economic impact report from the national labor market analysis firm EMSI, Oregon's community colleges added $9.8 billion to the state's economy, and the colleges' impact supported more than 131,000 jobs. Essentially, colleges and their students support one out of every 20 jobs in Oregon.

Community colleges in Oregon provide job training, degree and certificate programs, and upskilling in a variety of fields to meet local community business and industry needs, including advanced manufacturing, industrial engineering, health/biomedical sciences, agriculture/food, natural resources, transportation, business management, technology, communications and apprenticeship. Community colleges work closely with industry leaders in their communities to make sure CTE program curriculum are on par with industry needs and the latest best practices.

Available programs at each college, in addition to information about how to get started in a community college CTE program, is available at www.oregoncommunitycolleges.com.

The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA), in coordination with the state's 17 community colleges, will celebrate National CTE Month with a variety of virtual activities to engage and inform legislators and communities about the relevancy and value of CTE programs.

Each week will include a CTE Month e-newsletter to legislators, social media messaging and other communication from each of the colleges about their CTE programs. In addition, OCCA plans to engage with the Community College Caucus to highlight CTE students, as well as discuss the importance of supporting one-time funding for addressing cybersecurity issues at the colleges.

The community is encouraged to support their local college's CTE programs by posting to social media using the hashtags #ORCommCollegeCTE, #WhyCTEMatters, #ORCommColleges.

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