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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Community Colleges Celebrate CTE Month as the Backbone of Oregon's Workforce and Economy

SALEM, Ore. – Throughout February, Oregon's community colleges will celebrate National Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month by highlighting the programs that power the state's workforce and strengthen local economies. **Community Colleges WORK for Oregon**, and Career and Technical Education programs are at the heart of that impact.

As part of National CTE Month, the Oregon Community College Association (OCCA), in partnership with Oregon's 17 community colleges, will host **CTE Day at the Capitol on February 18**. The event will feature displays and hands-on demonstrations in the East Galleria showcasing the wide range of CTE programs offered by community colleges across the state. Legislators and members of the public are invited to attend and engage directly with college representatives to learn how community colleges deliver workforce solutions for Oregon.

Community college leaders, students, and stakeholders will also be at the Capitol on February 18 to highlight the importance of maintaining stable funding for community colleges and to encourage legislators to support maintaining the Community College Support Fund through the remainder of the biennium. Sustained investment in community colleges is critical to workforce training, economic mobility, and the long-term health of local communities across Oregon.

As the primary workforce training providers statewide, community colleges play a critical role in Oregon's economic vitality. Their CTE programs are designed in direct partnership with local employers to meet regional workforce demands, offering hands-on, career-connected education that leads directly to jobs. According to a 2023 economic impact study by Lightcast, Oregon's community colleges generated \$9.6 billion in economic impact during Fiscal Year 2021–22 and supported 117,970 jobs statewide, nearly one in every 22 jobs in Oregon.

From short-term training and industry certifications to associate and bachelor's degrees, community college CTE programs prepare Oregonians for in-demand careers in advanced manufacturing, industrial engineering, healthcare and biomedical sciences, agriculture and natural resources, transportation, business management, technology, communications, and apprenticeships. These programs help individuals build family-wage careers while ensuring employers have access to a skilled, job-ready workforce that keeps Oregon's economy competitive.

“CTE is where Oregon’s workforce begins,” said Dr. Abby Lee, Executive Director of OCCA. “Community colleges are the backbone of our state’s economy, training the professionals who keep Oregon moving forward. National CTE Month and CTE Day at the Capitol are opportunities to show policymakers and the public how Community Colleges WORK for Oregon by delivering real workforce solutions and supporting local economies.”

Community members are encouraged to join the celebration and support their local community college CTE programs by following them, as well as OCCA, on social media. OCCA and the colleges will highlight their CTE programs throughout the month on various platforms.

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*The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) represents the 17 publicly chartered community colleges and their locally elected board members in Oregon. Founded in 1962, OCCA’s purpose is to support the colleges before policy-makers and partners whose actions affect the well-being of community colleges across the state.*