

Congressman Greg Walden tries to get his hands around conflicting testimony at a salmon survival hearing in Pendleton. Turn to Page 3 for more.



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Tribes, ODOT to increase highway jobs

Agreement means chance to participate in 'state-funded' highway construction projects

PENDLETON - Representatives of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have joined ranks with a goal of boosting the numbers of minorities and women in the highway construction trades.

An agreement between the Tribes and ODOT means the CTUIR will now have the opportunity to participate in "state-funded highway construction projects" through the Oregon Transportation Investment Act.

Members of the Tribal Employment Rights Office, Human Resources staff and ODOT's Indian representative, Henry Manjarres, will meet with prospective employees at 10 a.m. March 8 in the Large Conference Room in the CTUIR Administration Building.

The first meeting of a Northeastern Oregon Workforce Alliance took place Feb. 21 at Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

The Workforce Alliance is part of ODOT's Workforce Development Plan, which has three critical elements:

- Increase diversity in employment;
- Increase apprenticeship participation; and
- Provide more

training resources and opportunities for highway construction careers.

"We estimated there will be about 350 jobs created with the construction and renovation of bridges in this area, which will result in approximately 35 apprenticeships being created for the local area," said Andre Baugh, diversity manager for the Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners, one of the agencies represented at the Feb. 21 meeting.

Phil LaCourse, CTUIR Human Resources Director, said the collaboration between the Tribes and ODOT, and the expanded opportunity to work on state-funded projects, is "recognition of our government-to-government relationship."

Said LaCourse: "CTUIR has enjoyed a good relationship with ODOT and we appreciate their respect of our sovereign authority and reserved treaty rights within our ceded lands."

Greg Azure, TERO Program manager, said the new Workforce Alliance means CTUIR will participate in the "ramped-up training opportunities" through the Oregon Transportation Investment.

"We hope to see seven apprenticeship positions produced from this effort for the Tribes," said Azure.

At the Pendleton launch, the group established a formal Workforce Alliance Advisory Committee made up of representatives from state, county and city



More Oregon Department of Transportation highway construction jobs financed through the Oregon Transportation Investment Act III could become available for tribal members through a recently created Northeastern Oregon Workforce Alliance.

agencies; local service providers; women and minority groups; contractors; construction firms; and unions. The group began working on ways to make the best use of existing programs to build a qualified labor pool for the growing number of highway construction jobs.

ODOT's highway and bridge construction projects will reach record levels in the next seven to 10 years. At the same time, Oregon is facing a shortage of qualified highway workers at the apprentice and skilled journey levels.

"The ultimate goal of the Workforce Development Plan is to provide Oregonians with the skills to main-

tain well-paying, sustainable careers," said ODOT Diversity Manager Michael Cobb.

The Workforce Development Plan implementation is a two-year pilot project. During this phase, all Oregon Transportation Investment Act III projects statewide will use the new increased apprenticeship and training goals, and women and minority aspirational targets.

The new goals and targets also apply to all ODOT construction projects in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties.

Following the two-year trial, and

pending Federal Highway Administration approval, ODOT will determine whether to include the new increased training goals and targets on all ODOT projects statewide.

"This represents a great opportunity to increase participation for tribal members in the construction industry," said Susie Calhoun, CTUIR Human Resources Training Coordinator. "We will have an informational meeting to discuss these opportunities with the community. We want to gauge the community's interest in working in highway construction."

For more information, contact Calhoun at 541-276-3570 or email SusieCalhoun@ctuir.com, or Tom Strandberg, ODOT Public Information Officer, at 541-963-1330 or email thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us.

TERO INFO MEETING

10 a.m. March 8
Large Conference Room
Administration Building

TERO staff will provide updated information on the upcoming construction season. The ODOT OTIA-III workforce development plan will be discussed. Information on scheduled projects also available. Call 541-276-3570.