



Commissioner Brad Avakian
Bureau of Labor and Industries

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Avakian, Thurston Students Attend Class at Training Facility
*State Labor Commissioner joins apprenticeship preparation program students for a day
with the Operating Engineers*

EUGENE- State Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian joined Thurston High School students for a trip to the Operating Engineers Local 701 Training Facility in Eugene today. Students visited the facility as part of their coursework in the Trade Skills Fundamentals Program; they were able to see first-hand the operating engineers training facility and operate an assortment of heavy equipment simulators. Thurston is one of three pilot schools receiving technical and grant support from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) to support high school apprenticeship preparation programs like Trade Skills Fundamentals, a partnership between local apprenticeship training committees, industry professionals, Lane Community College, Thurston High School and BOLI. The program exposes high school students to high-wage, high-demand apprenticeship opportunities and provides basic training for entry into successful trade careers.

“Oregon’s next frontier begins with identifying what our employers need and seeing that our schools and training programs are equipped to provide it,” said Commissioner Avakian. “This will lead to more local hires and a stronger, more self-sufficient Oregon economy. The challenging economic climate facing the nation makes these efforts all the more important.”

Severe workforce shortages in the construction and manufacturing sectors are projected over the next 10 years. The Oregon Employment Department estimates that the construction industry alone will grow by 14.3 percent during this period. When combined with the number of workers set to retire, it is estimated that an additional 30,000 new workers will be needed to fill construction jobs in the next 10 years. These plumbers, electricians, and millwrights make up the infrastructure of the state’s economy. Ensuring that Oregon workers have the skills necessary to obtain these jobs will ensure Oregon remains competitive in the global market and that its workers will have the high wage jobs to support a high quality of life.

“Exposing high school students to apprenticeship opportunities gives them the option to explore trade careers and enhance their skill development,” said Nelda Wilson, Business

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The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.

Manager of Operating Engineers Local 701. “The Operating Engineers are committed to providing the best career training opportunities available and we want to attract the best and brightest students.”

The Trade Skills Fundamentals Program began this year at Thurston High School. Grant funding and technical support is provided by BOLI and is used to create partnerships between local apprenticeship training committees, industry professions, community colleges and high schools. Students who are admitted into the program take courses that provide an introduction to the construction industry and teach the skills necessary to be a successful applicant and apprentice. Students learn about various construction trades, safety concepts, construction trade vocabulary, applied math, reading blueprints and operating hand and power tools. Students also receive dual credit from Lane Community College and should be fully qualified to enter an adult apprenticeship program after high school.

The State Labor Commissioner oversees BOLI, which works to promote the development of a highly skilled, competitive workforce in Oregon through the apprenticeship program and through partnerships with government, labor, business, and educational institutions. In addition, the Bureau works to protect the rights of workers and citizens to equal, non-discriminatory treatment; encourages and enforces compliance with state laws relating to wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment; and advocates policies that balance the demands of the workplace and employers with the protections of workers and their families. The Bureau’s Technical Assistance for Employers Unit exists to train employers to understand and comply with the law both wage and hour and civil rights law.

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