

COCC Offers Info Sessions On New Composites Program

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) is offering two information sessions about its new composites manufacturing program. The sessions will be offered at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 12, in Room 306 of the Manufacturing and Training Center on the Redmond Campus; and at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 14, in Room 206 of Ponderosa Hall on the Bend Campus.

COCC's composites manufacturing program grew from the need of local composites companies for trained employees, according to Ross Tomlin, dean of instruction at the college. The big two aviation manufacturing companies (Epic Air and Columbia Air) are expected to need 400 to 500 new employees over the next few years. Starting wages for those with a composites certificate would be \$14 to \$15 per hour.

The COCC program is designed to provide students with enough basic skills to obtain employment after just one term of training, which would qualify them for a basic composites certificate. With two additional terms of training (three total), students can earn a second certificate in composites manufacturing technology. Most students would be employed after the first term, but would be encouraged to continue training to earn the second certificate. In total, the program entails 36 credits and is eligible for financial aid. The courses will be taught by a COCC-approved instructor.

One of the unique aspects of the program is the relevant and realistic hands-on training in the second and third terms of the program. Training will be on the actual production lines of the local composites manufacturing firms, primarily Epic Air, Columbia Air and Entre Prises. Students will see the actual processes used for manufacturing different composites products; in turn, the companies will have a chance to see the students in action

Composites are one of the fastest growing segments in manufacturing as more products are being made out of composites. It is predicted that the automotive industry will eventually switch over to using composites for automobiles. There are only two other associate degree programs in composites in the western U.S. One is in the Seattle area at Edmonds Community College and the other is in Southern California.

For more information, call Dennis Simenson at 504.2942.