

Major statewide workforce initiative to be unveiled February 15

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Governor's office to announce funding for five new manufacturing consortia

The Oregon Manufacturing Workforce Strategy, a major initiative to fill the skilled worker shortage and build competitive Oregon companies will be formally unveiled at a public event this week.

Oregon's manufacturing economy comprises 6,000 small- to medium-sized companies that are struggling to survive in the face of global competition. In the next decade, those manufacturers will need 53,000 skilled workers to replace retiring workers and fill new jobs. The state recognizes the importance of manufacturing to the economy: At \$53,350, the average annual wage of manufacturing employees is 46 percent higher than the state average, and manufacturing is responsible for 15 percent of the state's output.

And the state has a plan to support this crucial sector of the economy.

"Skilled workers help give manufacturers the competitive edge businesses need in today's global market," said Governor Ted Kulongoski. "Oregon's Manufacturing Workforce Strategy will ensure that Oregon has the ability to give workers the skills to drive innovation and grow Oregon's economy."

Allen Alley, deputy chief of staff to Governor Kulongoski, will deliver the keynote address at the unveiling. Alley will also announce funding of five new high-performance manufacturing consortia in Oregon and creation of a statewide Web site to promote the importance of manufacturing and link statewide manufacturing activity.

Other speakers will address the importance of Oregon's community colleges and apprenticeship

programs to Oregon's strategy.

The event will include opportunities for networking among manufacturers, community college and university representatives, union leaders, policy makers and other key stakeholders from across the state.

The Oregon Manufacturing Workforce Strategy event will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Thursday, February 15, at ESCO Corporation, 2141 NW 25th Ave. in Portland. Those who want to attend can RSVP by contacting Julie Hatten at (503) 778-6208 or JLHatten@nwhpec.org.

About the Oregon Manufacturing Workforce Strategy:

The Oregon Manufacturing Workforce strategy is a four-year plan to link regionally based "centers" of manufacturing activity across the state to share ideas and best practices; expand the reach of high-performance manufacturing practices and techniques to create more competitive companies; fill the skilled worker shortage by investing in training of current workers and attracting new workers to high-demand occupations; and raise awareness about the value of Oregon's manufacturing industry and its high-wage career opportunities. The Oregon Workforce Investment Board spearheaded the plan's development with assistance from public and private entities throughout Oregon. The Northwest High Performance Enterprise Consortium is managing the plan's implementation.

[Oregon's Manufacturing Workforce Strategy \(full report, PDF 1.3 MB\)](#)

[Oregon Manufacturing Workforce Strategy \(summary brochure, PDF 1.6 MB\)](#)

About the Northwest High Performance Consortium (NWPEC):

NWHPEC represents a cross section of Oregon and southwest Washington companies sharing best practices to enhance global competitiveness, helping keep companies and jobs in the Northwest. Since 2002, NWHPEC has been a resource for networking, learning, and experiencing high-performance manufacturing. NWHPEC hosts a number of educational events where attendees can share experiences and learn how to improve business practices and processes. Learning tours give members opportunities to see how other companies use high-performance practices. Its experience leading cross-industry consortia makes NWHPEC ideally suited to lead implementation of the Oregon Manufacturing Workforce Strategy.

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