

PENDLETON

Schools, college, county team up for career program

East Oregonian

The Pendleton School District announced Tuesday the start of the Connections to Careers program, a collaboration between the district, Blue Mountain Community College and Umatilla County to bolster the schools' career technical education program.

The district will use a portion of a \$390,745 CTE grant it recently received from the state to contract with Susan Bower of Eastern Oregon Business Source to establish the program. The county and BMCC will also contribute funds to the program.

"Under the 12-month contract, Bower will serve as the project manager and will hire and supervise a School to Careers Coordinator," a press release announcing the program states. "Together, they will build and market the program, develop employer connections and place students in learning experiences for the 2016-17 school year."

When the year is up, Bower will help transition the program from Eastern Oregon Business Source to the Pendleton School District.

In a statement, Bower said she got the idea from Umatilla County Workforce Needs Study, the results of

which will be presented at an economic development summit Thursday.

Officials from all three collaborators all released statements supporting Connections to Careers.

"Part of what is exciting to me about this collaboration is the opportunity to make our grant funds go farther through partnerships," district CTE Coordinator Curt Thompson said. "It also allows us to more efficiently connect with the larger business community, accelerating the building of those relationships."

Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering said the program would further the county's economic development goals.

"More jobs bring more home sales and additional tax revenue and that's what we want," Elfering said.

BMCC President Cam Preus said the college was backing the program because it would offer many of the same opportunities — job shadows, job tours, career work experience and possibly internships — to BMCC students.

People interested in applying for the schools and careers coordinator position can contact Bower by calling 541-215-9252 or emailing susanbower@eobusiness-source.com.