Skills fair encourage trades careers for girls and women

The seventh annual Women in Trades Skills Fair, featuring 46 exhibits with hands-on activities, will take place March 10 at the Rogue Community College Table Rock Campus, 7800 Pacific Ave. in White City.

Middle and high school girls from throughout Jackson and Josephine counties will be attending between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The public is invited to this free event from noon to 5 p.m. Last year’s fair was attended by 451 girls from local schools and 125 women.

“Girls can do just about anything we put our minds to,” one middle school student wrote following last year’s fair.

“This year’s event will be even bigger and better,” said Barbara Campbell, gender equity coordinator at RCC. “Too few women and girls consider good paying trades jobs as employment options. Their options for employment will increase once they see they can be successful in the skills that make up trades work.”

A popular highlight of the trades fair, “10 Things Girls Need to Know,” will again be offered, with activities such as measuring, using a cordless drill, hammering, and pull-starting an engine. There also will be videos showing women working at a wide range of jobs.

Representatives from RCC professional-technical programs, apprenticeship training, local contractors and utilities, and government and non-profit agencies offering employment or training will help participants explore skills needed to work in the trades. Each of the 46 exhibits will include a hands-on activity such as building a toolbox, climbing poles and ladders, surveying, conduit bending, meter reading, building a flagpole base, plumbing and leveling, cutting and soldering pipe, and setting tile. Other activities will include using protective equipment, squaring up a building, using math in construction, welding, creating decorative concrete, using a laser level, making mosaics with tile, painting, driving a forklift, and karate.

The fair is presented by RCC, Southern Oregon Education Service District, and Oregon Department of Education. RCC organizers work closely with educators from regional middle and high schools in designing and promoting the fair.

For more information call Barbara Campbell at 245-7999, or visit http://learn.roguecc.edu/genderequity/

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