



CAMILLE PREUS, PRESIDENT
BMCC PENDLETON
2411 NW CARDEN
PO BOX 100
PENDLETON, OR 97801
541.276.1260

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2016

Contact: Casey White-Zollman, Vice President Public Relations
541-278-5839, cwhitezollman@bluecc.edu

Students complete welding course through BMCC Baker County-Behlen partnership

BAKER CITY, Ore. – Five young adult college students, including a dual-enrolled high school student, last week completed three college credits each in Basic Welding, thanks to a partnership between Blue Mountain Community College’s Baker County Center and Behlen Country.

Behlen Country stepped up to the plate to offer a welding maintenance shop as a training space for BMCC’s welding program when the need arose earlier this year. The partnership was successful, allowing students ample hands-on practice time on perfecting their welding skills.

The spring term course was taught by BMCC alumnus Adam Wirth, a local FFA agriculture mechanics coach and mentor. Students in the course, as well as Behlen management took note of Wirth’s successful instructional strategies that led to successful student performance.

“The value of local partnerships and the ability for area young adults to participate in technical training with college credit is a huge benefit to both the individual and the community,” said Dan Koopman, director of the BMCC Baker County Center. “Students are able to use financial aid and continue in a Career Pathway by transferring the college credit they have earned as they pursue their college career. BMCC appreciates Behlen’s strong support of local technical training. This initial college credit offering was possible due to Behlen’s willingness to partner with Baker County’s only accredited community college.”

Koopman also noted that many students use their newly acquired technical skills to “earn their way through college” rather than incurring more student loan debt.

In addition to the standard college credit basic welding course, Behlen Manager Rod Isham and local resident Julee Hicks partnered with BMCC to offer a special welding and metal fabrication workshop for high school students in Unity attending the Burnt River School District. Many of the students who attend Burnt River are international students representing more than five countries, from Germany to Asia and beyond. Isham and Hicks noted how quickly the students caught on to MIG welding and the use of a plasma cutter.

BMCC Baker County looks forward to expanding its course offerings in welding with a developing partnership at North Powder Charter School in the fall of 2016.

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BMCC BAKER COUNTY
3275 BAKER STREET
BAKER CITY, OR 97814
541.523.9127

BMCC HERMISTON
980 SE COLUMBIA DRIVE
HERMISTON, OR 97838
541.567.1800

BMCC MILTON-FREEWATER
311 N COLUMBIA
MILTON-FREEWATER, OR 97862
541.938.7176

BMCC MORROW COUNTY
PO BOX 939 / 300 NE FRONT STREET
BOARDMAN, OR 97818
541.481.2099

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