



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2019

George Fox University, Oregonians for Rural Health sign exclusive MOU to explore allied and mental health college in Roseburg

Oregonians for Rural Health and George Fox University, a nationally recognized college based in Newberg, Oregon, have officially signed an exclusive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to explore building an allied and mental health college in Roseburg. The college is envisioned to provide a reliable pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals in multiple high-demand medical fields, connect individuals to living wage jobs through locally delivered degree programs, and create economic growth and stability across the region.

“The demand for healthcare continues to steadily grow and along with it the need for skilled providers. Southern and rural Oregon face growing allied and mental health workforce shortages that pose serious healthcare access issues, despite aggressive and costly recruiting efforts,” said Kelly Morgan, CHI Mercy Health CEO and long-time member of the Oregonians for Rural Health coalition. “The idea of building a regional allied and mental health college to tackle workforce and healthcare access issues and revitalize our economy came to the forefront several years ago. It’s exciting to be taking this step forward with George Fox today.”

Morgan added, “George Fox is an established Oregon academic institution whose broad range of nationally accredited allied and mental health educational programs directly serve acute workforce needs shared by providers, including hospitals and medical facilities operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.”

The Roseburg VA Medical Center, which is a principal partner in the college initiative, provided testimony to the Oregon State Assembly last fall, indicating many of its allied health positions are difficult to fill and that “Veteran access to primary, specialty, and mental health care can be increased if we could establish and maintain a professional workforce of healthcare workers.”

The signed MOU establishes an exclusive partnership between Oregonians for Rural Health and George Fox to evaluate working in cooperation to build a regional allied and mental health college in Roseburg that offers advanced (Bachelor, Master and PhD level) degree programs. Under the MOU, efforts will focus on determining the college scope, degree programs and framework, in addition to securing a site location in Roseburg and initiating fund development and in-kind contributions to build and equip the college facility.

“Over the last two decades, George Fox has expanded from a small regional college to a national university with a broad range of programs. As we continue to add degree programs in healthcare and related fields, we’re excited about this potential opportunity to help Southern and rural Oregon solve its workforce shortages,” said Linda Samek, Provost for George Fox.

Founded in 1891, George Fox is one of Oregon’s oldest colleges. The main campus is located in Newberg, Oregon, plus the university operates teaching sites in Salem, Redmond, and Portland and provides online instruction. George Fox’s enrollment for the 2018-2019 academic year totals over 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students. About 57 percent of students are from outside the Portland area, and 81 percent of recent graduates are employed in Oregon.

“Healthcare is vital to our local communities and the region. Our providers, including CHI Mercy Health and the Roseburg VA in Douglas County, have struggled with growing allied health job vacancy rates in multiple occupational fields that make it difficult to keep up with the demand for services,” said Wayne Patterson, Executive Director of the Umpqua Economic Development Partnership. “Healthcare plays a pivotal role in our economy by providing good paying jobs, supporting local employers, and making the area attractive for new business development. Diversifying our economy by investing in healthcare also serves as a key driver in creating economic growth and stability for the entire region.”

Patterson noted that close to an estimated 50,000 healthcare and social assistance jobs will be added across Oregon through 2027, according to the latest workforce projections published by the Oregon Employment Department (OED). The estimated figure is over 3,500 more healthcare jobs than the OED had last projected through 2024. For many occupations, increased job vacancy rates are due to high attrition resulting from baby boomers entering retirement. It is projected that over 20,000 jobs in registered nursing alone will be opening due to attrition. In a study conducted by the Oregon Center for Nursing last year, it was found that Oregon’s educational system is not graduating enough students to meet projected allied and mental health workforce needs and that advanced level educational opportunities are lacking in the state.

“We have a unique opportunity here in Roseburg thanks, in part, to our central location in Southern Oregon that positions us to effectively serve the region and given the expertise and involvement of our diverse coalition of healthcare providers like Mercy and the Roseburg VA, elected officials, and others to better ensure access to local quality healthcare, create living wage jobs, and revitalize the economy,” said Patterson.

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ABOUT OREGONIANS FOR RURAL HEALTH

Oregonians for Rural Health, founded in January 2016, is a coalition of community leaders, healthcare providers, economic development groups, educators and others dedicated to promoting the health and vitality of rural communities in Oregon.

CONTACTS

- Kelly Morgan, CHI Mercy Health CEO: (541) 677-2467
- Wayne Patterson, Umpqua Economic Development Partnership Executive Director: (541) 492-2820



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as “MOU”) is made and entered upon the date of signature by and between George Fox University and Oregonians for Rural Health (each a “Party” and collectively, the “Parties”).

WHEREAS, the demand for healthcare in communities across Oregon, including in Southern and Rural Oregon, continues to steadily grow; and

WHEREAS, significant current and projected workforce shortages exist in multiple allied health and behavioral health fields that pose serious healthcare access issues; and

WHEREAS the lack of available trained allied health professionals restricts the ability of hospitals, clinics, and other providers to provide quality healthcare services, resulting in longer wait times to receive medical care; and

WHEREAS, aggressive and costly recruiting efforts have not worked to alleviate allied health and behavioral health workforce shortages; and

WHEREAS, educational programs for high demand allied health and behavioral health fields/occupations are needed to reverse workforce shortages; and

WHEREAS, individuals who train in rural areas are more likely work in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of educational opportunities in Southern and Rural Oregon for many allied health and behavioral health occupations

WHEREAS, accelerated educational programs are needed for veterans with active service medical training to obtain degrees and to practice in civilian settings, including medical facilities run by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, hospitals, clinics, and medical facilities, including both in the private sector and those operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, need a reliable pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals to provide adequate access to healthcare services.

NOW, THEREFORE IN CONSIDERATION of the foregoing the Parties hereby agree as follows:

1. Parties shall enter into an exclusive collaborative partnership to evaluate working in cooperation to build an allied health and behavioral health college in Roseburg, Oregon, that offers advanced (Bachelor, Master and PhD level) degree programs
2. Oregonians for Rural Health hereby assumes primary responsibility of the following:
 - a. Coordinating acquisition of land of adequate size located in the Roseburg, Oregon, area upon which to build the college facility

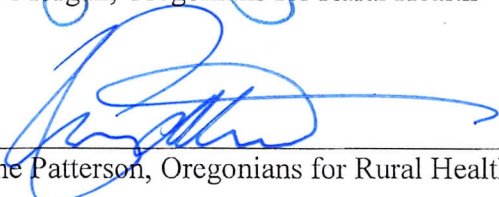
- b. Solicitating an independent entity to assume full ownership of the college facility and facilitating a long-term lease agreement with George Fox University
 - c. Identification and pursuit of state, federal, private, and non-profit funding sources for use in building the college facility and covering operational start-up costs
 - d. Securing in-kind contributions to build and equip the college facility
 - e. Facilitating ongoing involvement in the college initiative and its development among coalition partners, including the City of Roseburg, Douglas County local, state, and federal officials, Umpqua Economic Development Partnership, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, CHI Mercy Health, Roseburg VA Health Care System and U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, in addition regional healthcare providers and academic institutions and others
 - f. Expediting the permitting and approval process for the college facility
3. George Fox University hereby assumes primary responsibility of the following:
- a. Determining college scope, degree programs, and framework
 - b. Estimating college facility size requirements and construction costs based on program needs
 - c. Determining estimated operational start-up costs and requirements
 - d. Evaluating college facility location options and selecting a build site in the Roseburg, Oregon, area
 - e. Supplying background and college concept materials to support fund generation efforts
 - f. Providing testimony and other support for proceedings with local, state, and federal officials, agencies, and commissions
 - g. Evaluating and securing potential academic institutions as secondary partners to scope and manage selected degree programs and/or cover specific instructional needs
4. The term of this MOU shall be effective for 6 months or upon the date in which a final agreement is reached by both parties to pursue building an allied and behavioral health college in Roseburg, Oregon, or if both parties mutually agree to extend this MOU.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, by their signatures below, the parties hereto execute this Memorandum of Understanding to be executed and effective as of the Effective Date.

By: 

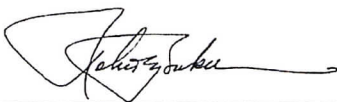
Kelly Morgan, Oregonians for Rural Health

Date: 2/7/19

By: 

Wayne Patterson, Oregonians for Rural Health

Date: 2/7/19

By: 

Robin Baker, President, George Fox University

Date: 2-6-2019



Letter of Support: Rural Oregon Regional Allied and Mental Health College

Southern and Rural Oregon are facing growing allied and mental health workforce shortages that pose serious healthcare access issues. News about increasing wait times at the doctor's office in rural communities and among veterans has already made news headlines. Hospitals and providers have continued to expand services to keep up with growing demand. Yet, workforce shortages in multiple allied and mental health fields make expanding, let alone maintaining, healthcare services increasingly difficult despite aggressive and often costly recruiting efforts.

Over the last several years, healthcare providers, economic groups, elected officials, and others have come together to find viable, long-term solutions to shared workforce challenges. **The idea of building a regional college in Roseburg, which is centrally located in Southern Oregon and in close proximity to the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs' largest medical facility in the area, that can provide advanced allied and mental health instruction came to the forefront as a key solution.**

- Building a regional pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals will work to reverse growing access issues to critical care
- Those who train in rural areas are more likely to stay and work in rural areas than those trained in urban areas
- A new stream of graduates will fill growing job vacancies within Southern Oregon and rural communities throughout the state
- Access to physical and mental healthcare services will be increased throughout our rural communities, especially for Southern Oregon's large veteran population

Healthcare is vital to our local communities and the region. Our local economy has struggled now for decades. Investing in healthcare provides a viable pathway toward revitalizing and growing our economy, while ensuring our communities have access to critical healthcare services.



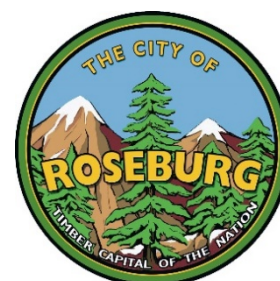
Mercy Medical Center



Roseburg VA
Healthcare System



UMPQUA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP



Opinion

Sunday, November 19, 2017 | A4

Tapping into a need

Work group created by Legislature to aid allied health college initiative kicks off

I wanted to reach out to the community this fall with a quick update regarding our work on the allied health college initiative work group that my colleagues and I successfully created in this year's 2017 legislative session. It is no secret that our community and the greater Southern Oregon region has seen heavy hits to our economic health due to federal timber resources restrictions.

Despite the struggles felt in our part of the state, one area of our economy has seen growth. Health care in our region has expanded to keep up with our community's growing needs. Health care demand throughout Southern Oregon is so great that CHI Mercy Health and the Roseburg VA have had trouble finding enough medical personnel to staff the massive need.

I believe that part of the solution to revitalizing our struggling economy and demand is to tap into this health care need, to drive future growth and long-term stability. We need to make it possible for our health care providers to

continue providing and expanding services, especially as our population ages and we continue to see more retirement age individuals move into the area. We need to

connect workers with new career job training opportunities and good health care jobs.

That's why building an allied health college in Roseburg, which is centrally located in Southern Oregon, makes good economic and social sense. Not only will the school increase opportunities for those interested in the health care field, but the influx of students, faculty and their families will trigger supporting industries, strengthening and expanding economic activity in the region.

The beauty of this solution is that it is not dependent on attracting and retaining some large out-of-state corporation. Rather, it allows us to "grow our own." Expanding our local economy in this way will help



Dallas Heard
Guest Column

transform Roseburg, and Southern Oregon, into a place where our youth will want to call home after graduation.

This last legislative session, I worked with

Oregonians for Rural Health, which includes among many others the Umpqua Economic Development Partnership, CHI Mercy Health and Roseburg VA, in securing bipartisan support for a state-supported work group, tasked with advancing the allied health college initiative. These steps signify a level of commitment from the state of Oregon that this project has not previously enjoyed.

In addition to securing state involvement in the effort, the project has seen increased support from community leaders and elected officials across the region and state. It was expanded on our partnerships with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs and the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

The college would enable the VA to grow its own health care workforce, ensuring better care for our veterans who in Douglas County make up roughly 20 percent of our total population. Not only that, but veterans with medical training coming off active duty would be able to attend a college that provides them an opportunity to build upon and apply their skills in a civilian setting.

I believe the allied health college will be an important part of a revitalized regional economy and improved access to the critical health care services. This project will help the Douglas County area rediscover our sense of purpose, strength and identity.

We are a strong and ambitious people here in Douglas County and all we are asking for is that people let us earn and shape our own destiny. I ask for your support, and most of all your prayers, that we will achieve our goals in this worthy endeavor.

Dallas Heard is the Republican state representative for District 2.

PUBLIC FORUM

Gun violence speaks more to society than to laws

It seems like a shooting is happening somewhere on a weekly basis. Many insist that the time has come to adopt some "common sense" gun laws.

We certainly should be open to a discussion of what that could be. Unfortunately many of the deaths are from individuals who broke no gun laws. In other cases, laws already on the books were not enforced. The first thing that we should insist upon is that our existing laws be enforced.

Some believe that guns have no place in modern society and should be banned and confiscated as some other countries have done. This, of course, would require repeal of the Second Amendment. Wholesale repeal and confiscation would not work and only result in tremendous so-

College Initiative Advances Forward

Wayne Patterson Sep 16, 2018



Umpqua Economic Development Partnership director Wayne Patterson holds packs of locally inspired career trading cards in Roseburg on August 2. MICHAEL SULLIVAN/The News-Review

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Among the economic development initiatives happening in Douglas County, the one that presents the greatest potential for new jobs and longterm growth and stability is building an allied and mental health college. Importantly, creating a pipeline of skilled healthcare providers will better ensure local access to quality care in our community and across Southern Oregon.

Over the past year, the Umpqua Economic Development Partnership, along with our many partners, has made good progress in getting state agencies involved and mapping out the building blocks of the college.

Healthcare demand continues to grow, especially as our population ages, and along with it the need for skilled providers. The Oregon Employment Department just released its latest workforce projections through 2027, which confirm steady job growth in multiple allied- and mental-health fields. Notably, healthcare and social assistance will add 49,500 jobs statewide — the most of any sector. That's over 3,500 more healthcare jobs than OED last projected through 2027. The problem, particularly for rural communities like ours, is that many of these healthcare jobs are difficult to fill.

Our largest healthcare providers, CHI Mercy Health and Roseburg VA, have struggled with high job-vacancy rates despite costly recruiting efforts. The Roseburg VA, for example, already has a 16 percent job-vacancy rate for registered nurses, 20 percent rate for clinical social workers and 29 percent rate for radiologic technologists. And although the VA works to keep pace with growing demand, it also faces the challenge that a large percentage of its staff are older and will likely retire in A state-supported workgroup formed last year and facilitated by the Oregon Department of Veteran Affairs has taken up the task of doing an in-depth analysis on healthcare-workforce needs and informing the development of the college. There is a strong local presence on the workgroup that includes UEDP, CHI Mercy, Roseburg VA, Umpqua Community College, Area Health Education Center of Southwest Oregon, Cow Creek Tribe and the City of Roseburg. Local elected officials Senator Dallas Heard, Representative Gary Leif and Douglas County Commissioner Tim Freeman also serve on the workgroup, as do experts with the Oregon Health Authority, Oregon State Board of Nursing and the VA's Northwest Network, VISN 20.

Importantly, the creation of this workgroup has drawn together an exceptional level of knowledge and expertise to advance the college initiative forward. It is exciting to develop a new avenue for residents and veterans with active-service medical training to obtain degrees and secure healthcare jobs that offer living wages. And, by growing our own healthcare workforce, we can better ensure access to local quality care for families, seniors and veterans.

INTERESTED IN PROMOTING YOUR PRESCHOOL, BUSINESS, ACTIVITY, OR LESSONS TO THE 0-6 AGE GROUP? Reserve a table at the MOPS PRESCHOOL FAIR where you can meet with potential parents, grandparents, and caregivers.



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One key decision made about the college is that programs will be phased in over time, starting with those allied and mental health occupations with the highest demand. Included among the programs selected for phase one are nursing, physical therapy, radiology, medical/clinical lab technology, licensed clinical psychology and social work. It is important to underscore that the college will only offer advanced bachelor's, master's and PhD level degrees and will tie in directly with existing two-year community colleges, including UCC, which has exemplary associate level allied health programs.

Oregonians for Rural Health is in the process of developing a business plan for the college that outlines projected student enrollment, in addition to land, capitol and operating costs. Initial estimates project the college footprint for phase one to be around 152,500 square feet. By year five, the college is expected to instruct nearly 1,000 students. The leading build site for the college is in the downtown Roseburg area, which offers ready infrastructure and ample space to grow, although other potential building sites are available.

We have a unique opportunity here in Roseburg — thanks in part because of our central location, but certainly the exemplary group of partners who have come together — to revitalize our economy, create living wage jobs and better ensure access to quality local healthcare.

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Coalition says it has answer to timber job losses

Health care training can boost economy

KELLY BANTLE
For The News-Review

For decades, Southern Oregon's economy thrived on timber and wood products, providing steady jobs handed down from one generation to the next.

Yet, logging restrictions coupled with a range of other factors, including tough market conditions through the Great Recession, have taken a significant toll on the industry. And, while some recovery is now taking place, one

group, Oregonians for Rural Health, has mobilized to diversify the regional economy by capitalizing on the steady strength of healthcare.

"Oregon's state economy has made sizable gains post-recession, especially in Portland and other urban areas of the state," said Wayne Patterson, executive director of the Partnership for Economic Development in Douglas County, which is spearheading Oregonians for Rural Health. "Yet, Southern Oregon's

economy continues to lag behind. The scars of high unemployment and poverty weathered over the years across Southern Oregon run deep. Today, jobs are still tough for many to come by and the future remains rather uncertain."

Unemployment across Southern Oregon averaged nearly 16 percent at the height of the Great Recession in 2009. Douglas County was among the hardest hit counties with 18 percent unemployment. By comparison, Oregon's

unemployment rate was 12 percent. It was not until last year that unemployment rates in Southern Oregon fell into single digits. The latest data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics puts the average unemployment rate for Southern Oregon counties at 6.7 percent. This compares with the state's current unemployment rate of 4.8 percent, notably influenced by the Portland area's unemployment rate of 3.9 percent.

Southern Oregon has

historically experienced ups and downs in its regional economy, especially given the highly cyclical and volatile nature of the timber industry. Market conditions, including residential building booms and busts, largely drive production and, consequently, employment and revenue. Adding into the mix of uncertainty is timber supply, particularly following environmental restrictions on logging in federal forests during the 1990s. Since then, limited timber supplies have added

challenges to the industry and led to mill layoffs and closures.

Last month, the Bureau of Land Management released a new timber harvest plan for federal forestland in Western Oregon. Both timber executives and county officials issued warnings that it squeezes timber harvests to a point where further downsizing would be inevitable. A rash of continued mill layoffs and shutdowns throughout

HEALTH CARE, A12

MOTHER'S DAY



Shannon Dietz and her father Eric Dietz pose for a photograph holding an image of Kim Dietz at Pyrenees Vineyard on Thursday.

Mother's Day without mom

Shannon Dietz will be without her mother, a UCC shooting victim, on this special day

IAN CAMPBELL | The News-Review

Tragedy is born from all mass shootings — those at schools, churches, street corners and military bases — but as stories began to trickle out about those who died, and those who were injured or altered in some way from the shooting at Umpqua Community College, the knife that was plunged deep into the community's back seemed to twist.

For many, UCC was more than a place to earn good grades and get out, it was an opportunity to rest, restart and begin anew. Kim Dietz, however, was killed at age 59 in the midst of her own personal journey to find a new beginning.

More than seven months have passed since

Roseburg woman gets VIP access to Trump

IAN CAMPBELL
The News-Review

EUGENE — Thousands lined up at the Lane Events Center in Eugene on Friday for their chance to catch a glimpse of presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump, but one Roseburg resident was able to get her hands on front-row VIP tickets for the evening's event.

"Everyone was all pumped up and people were standing around talking about what issues they wanted him to address, it was fabulous," said Molly Adkins, 25.

Adkins and a few friends made the 70-minute drive north to witness the rally and be a part of the billionaire's run for president.

"I wanted to go because I'm a Republican woman and I wanted to find out more about his campaign," said Adkins who got her VIP ticket through the Umpqua Valley Republican Women. "I've always been a Trump fan ever since he first announced he was running."

Since the beginning, Adkins has tried to shed the perception that because she's a young woman, she wouldn't vote for Trump.

"He's the best hope for our country, so of course I'm a Trump supporter," she said. "Why should my gender or anything else mean anything different?"

Adkins, a member of the Umpqua Valley Republican Women and a volunteer

MOTHER, A12 **TRUMP, A2**



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- Comics..... D7
- Legals..... C4
- Obituaries, Records..... D8-9
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Low: 45
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FROM PAGE ONE



MICHAEL SULLIVAN/NEWS-REVIEW PHOTOS

Eric Dietz and daughter Shannon Dietz discuss the memory of Kim Dietz at Pyrenees Vineyard on Thursday.

MOTHER

From page A1

the shooting, and while many of the solemn milestones have come to pass, today will mark the first day Dietz's daughter, Shannon Dietz, will celebrate Mother's Day without a mom.

"She was very energetic and she would get out and do things which helped me do the same," Shannon Dietz said, "If it's just me going somewhere, I probably won't talk to anyone, but if I went with her, she would start talking to people and introduce me."

Ex-husband Eric Dietz said Kim Dietz was rejuvenating herself.

"She was moving like in a really good direction and it's sad that it was ended," Eric Dietz said. "I'm glad she was able to expand her group of friends so much."

The Dietzes moved to southern Oregon from southern California in 2008 with Shannon to become caretakers of Pyrenees Vineyards, a small Cabernet Sauvignon-heavy vineyard tucked between the South Umpqua River and a clustering of green, rolling hills north of Myrtle Creek.

The land is pastoral, filled with natural life and subtle movement. Ospreys hover above the rippling waters, chasing down fish while trying to chase away a kettel of circling vultures. A line of turtles sit along a downed log dipped into the river as a grouping of ducks float by. Insects crawl discretely over the vineyard's riverside deck, darting out of view to avoid the occasional gust of wind.

But in time, Kim Dietz and Eric Dietz separated, giving her the opportunity to set a new trajectory for herself.

"In the years at the vineyard, there just wasn't a lot for her to do," Shannon Dietz



Eric Dietz and daughter Shannon Dietz remember Kim Dietz as an energetic woman who was working toward a fresh start by attending Umpqua Community College.

said. "She gardened and mowed the lawn and helped with events, but that was about it."

With the separation and Shannon Dietz's recent high school graduation, Kim Dietz decided to take a few courses at UCC to amass more life experience while also joining her daughter at school.

The two moved to Roseburg in a small apartment and schooled together.

Shannon Dietz remembers having to help her with Microsoft Word, especially with copying and pasting text, a skill that eluded her mom. ("Going to UCC) was helping her a lot," Shannon Dietz said. "It was making her feel better about herself."

But when tragedy struck on Oct. 1, their plan of graduating and starting fresh was compromised.

"I guess I just wish my both had been able to get jobs, get the house nicer, go on vacations and have more fun together," Shannon Dietz said, pulling at the cuffs of her purple sweatshirt.

That Thursday morning, Eric Dietz was working at the vineyard when he received a call from his brother in San Clemente, California.

"Hey, doesn't your kid go to UCC," the brother asked.

"I guess I would say thank you, just for taking care of me."

Shannon Dietz

"There was a shooting there."

Eric Dietz climbed into his truck and drove the 20 miles north to the campus, calling the local dispatch center on the way for more information.

By the time he arrived at the campus, the police had barricaded off the entrance, leaving dozens of people with no other option than to mill around, waiting in agony.

When news came that everyone on campus was going to be bussed to the fairgrounds, Eric Dietz once again hopped in his truck and sped off.

At the fairgrounds, one of the buses had already arrived, with a second bus unloading as he parked nearby.

"I started walking through the crowd looking for either one of them when one of Kim's classmates came up to me and said, 'I'm so sorry, but I saw Kim get shot and I think she's dead,'" he recalled.

"That was really hard," Eric Dietz said with his arms crossed and his bearded chin buried into his chest.

Shannon Dietz wears one of her mother's silver rings in memory, a broad, worn ring with multiple symbols etched into its exterior including a witch's hat, a broom and a candle stick. She fiddles with the ring as she tearfully considers what she would tell her mother if she ever got another chance.

"I guess I would say thank you," she said after a long pause, tears pooling in the corners of her eyes. "Just for taking care of me."

Reporter Ian Campbell can be reached at 541-957-4209 or icampbell@nrtday.com. Or follow him on Twitter @MrCampbell17.

HEALTH CARE

From page A1

the region attributed to timber harvest cuts suggests a challenging future ahead for operators and the communities that rely on them.

The vanishing funds from timber industry revenues are expected to lead to cuts in social services provided by local governments. These cuts are likely to be compounded by already declining federal timber payments, which dipped this year to a record low of about \$60 million to be split for funding schools, libraries, law enforcement, roads and other services. While congress has continued to reauthorize timber payments for over 15 years, the future of this lifeline remains uncertain.

Investments in mill modernization and automation for many, particularly larger operators have led to year-over-year increases in production per worker. According to a recent report issued by the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis (OEA), the timber industry has regained much of its former output using fewer employees.

Back in its heyday during the 1960s and '70s, the OEA reports the wood products industry in Oregon contributed about 70,000 to 80,000 jobs that paid 30 percent more than the state average. This compares today with about 25,000 to 30,000 jobs that pay the state average.

"Log trucks will, no doubt, still be seen hauling loads up and down the I-5 corridor. What Southern Oregon communities need are long-term solutions that can help diversify our economy," said Patterson. "New economic drivers are needed that can provide greater stability, in addition to family-wage jobs critical to reversing the region's high unemployment and poverty levels."

Patterson added, "That's why several years ago, community leaders, businesses, economic groups and others began exploring options to diversify and renew the region's economy. Capitalizing on the recession-proof vitality of health care came to the forefront of options given its strong presence in the region and the growing need for services. What became apparent is that hospitals and providers are struggling to recruit skilled professionals for a variety of positions, including nursing, physical and occupational therapy, radiology and imaging and mental health. That led us to the idea of building a regional allied health medical college that would serve multiple high-demand fields."

Kelly Morgan, CEO of CHI Mercy Health in Roseburg, has been part of the effort since its start and echoed the growing need for skilled health care professionals.

"Demand for health care has grown in our area, statewide and nationally, and is projected to keep growing," he said. "More

individuals now have health insurance. Plus, our aging population places an even greater demand on services. It is critical for us to maintain and expand services to ensure our residents have access to local, affordable health care."

Mercy is not alone as confirmed in the Oregon Employment Department's 2015 Job Vacancy Survey Report released last March. Year over year, Oregon's health care industry has topped the list of total job vacancies in the state. Rates of difficult-to-fill health care job vacancies are particularly high in rural areas and expected to get worse. The primary reasons for health care job vacancies, as cited by employers surveyed, were low education levels among applicants and the lack of qualified candidates.

Patterson underscored the need for reliable health care in the region from an economic perspective.

"Without adequate health care, we will have a difficult time retaining and attracting businesses to the region," Patterson said. "Health care is a vital part of the region's infrastructure just like roads, electricity and water."

Health care did not suffer losses during the recession, although its growth did slow. The health care industry is relatively insulated from the typical peaks and valleys of business cycles experienced by other industries in good times and bad. This is largely attributable to much of its services being mandatory, rather than discretionary. A broken arm must be mended, whereas buying a new car or house is often put off during tough economic times.

In Oregon, health care is expanding with the growing population. According to the Oregon Employment Department forecasts, healthcare will add about 45,000 new jobs at a 22 percent growth rate through 2022. Professional and business services sector was the only other projected to have a slightly higher growth rate at 23 percent.

"Health care is a viable path forward to strengthen and diversify Southern Oregon's economy," said Patterson. "As hospitals and providers have told us and the state data shows, job vacancies already exist in multiple high-demand medical fields. The opportunity is here to link individuals, including youth and young adults, living in the region to those jobs through expanded workforce training. And, we need to ensure communities have access to reliable health care services."

Note: The next article in this series will examine growing health care demand and provider shortages in Southern Oregon that limit access to care. The article following will then explore Southern Oregon's growing youth exodus, in addition to workforce training needs.

Kelly Bantle is vice president for PacWest, a public affairs firm working with Oregonians for Rural Health. She can be reached at bantle@pacwestcom.com.



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Health care workers needed as demand grows

KELLY BANTLE

For The News-Review

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles on health care and medical education options in Southern Oregon.

An aging population coupled with substantial increases in health care insurance enrollment is driving up the demand for services in many communities across Oregon, particularly in rural areas. That has health care providers steadily expanding services and working steadfast, often

creatively, to ensure an adequate number of health care workers are available to deliver care.

"Health care demand has spiked in recent years," said Chris Gustafson, executive director of the Area Health Education Center of Southwest Oregon, a nonprofit that works to improve health in underserved or underserved communities in the region. "This influx of new patients comes at a time when there are already not enough health care providers to meet growing community needs, especially in our rural areas.

"And, the demand for health care is projected to keep rising as more and more baby-boomers age and require additional services," he added.

The need is now

National healthcare reforms, which were first implemented in 2013 through the Affordable Care Act, have connected large numbers of individuals with health insurance. Oregon's uninsured rate has since plummeted. One study conducted by the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Health

& Science University found that between June 2013 and June 2014 the number of Oregonians without health insurance dropped by 63 percent. It estimates that in 2013, about 350,000 Oregonians were uninsured compared to only 202,000 a year later.

Much of the decline in Oregon's uninsured rates is due to large enrollment increases in the Oregon Health Plan, the state's version of Medicaid. The government-funded program saw its enrollment jump from about 600,000 to nearly one million.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, OHP enrollment in Douglas County from 2012 to 2014 increased by 11 percent. Other Southern Oregon counties had comparable to higher increases such as in Josephine County where OHP enrollment was up by 14 percent.

Looming "silver tsunami"

America's population is getting older. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2030, adults over

HEALTH CARE, A8

We like it here

Some 20-something adults have found they enjoy what Roseburg and Douglas County have to offer



Megan Swearingen, a 26-year-old cardiac sonographer, enjoys working at the Shaw Heart Center in Roseburg and living in Douglas County.

CRAG REED
The News-Review

Megan Swearingen, a cardiac sonographer at the Shaw Heart Center in Roseburg, has the education, training and experience to get a job in her profession in a bigger city like Portland, but the 26-year-old likes the Douglas County area and at least for now has no intention of moving to a bigger city.

"I know a lot of young people don't like it here," said Swearingen who

grew up in southcentral Oregon. "But I have a lot of reasons to stay even though I don't have family here."

Kyle Parrish, 22, is a 2007 Roseburg High School graduate who left to earn his degree at Oregon State University in Corvallis and then returned to take an engineering job in the Roseburg office of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

"I wanted to come back to Roseburg," he said of his hometown. "I don't dislike big cities, but I really don't want to live there. I like the small town feel."

While it is generally true that many young people crave more urban settings following their high school or college graduations, and some professions and companies in Douglas County say it is hard to recruit people to this rural area, there are those like Swearingen and Parrish who do enjoy it here.

The News-Review talked to several people who are in their 20s about their choice to live in this area.

Their reasons ranged from

WORKERS, A9

STATE TREASURER RACE

Candidate: Life has prepped him for this

VERA WESTBROOK
The News-Review

Lake Oswego resident Jeff Gudman, a candidate for Oregon state treasurer, claims that running for state treasurer is a calling for him.

"Everything in my life has prepared me to be treasurer and that is all that I want to be," Gudman told The News-Review Friday.

Gudman is running unopposed on the Republican ballot.

As state treasurer, Gudman would be in charge of about \$50 billion of investable assets and up to \$15 billion in state debt.

"The role of the treasurer is not to simply count the money, but to make the money count so we get the biggest bang for the buck on all our investments," Gudman said.

As state treasurer, Gudman will ensure the state gets the lowest possible interest

GUDMAN, A9

Pot legalization still contentious in Oregon counties

ANDREW SELSKY
The Associated Press

REDMOND — Last year, Lindsey Pate and her husband, Christopher, bought 15 acres of high desert covered in junipers in central Oregon, where they planned to grow marijuana in greenhouses to sell for recreational use.

In December, however, Deschutes County

POT, A8



- Abley..... B7
- Classifieds..... C1
- Comics..... D7
- Legal..... C6
- Obituaries, Records..... D8
- Opinion..... A6-7
- Travel..... D8



INSIDE
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FROM PAGE ONE

HEALTH CARE

From page A1

the age of 65 will make up more than 20 percent of the population, up from about 15 percent today. Although just a 5 percent shift, it represents millions of additional Medicare-age patients flooding into the health care system. And, counties across Southern Oregon already have larger populations of adults age 65 and older, ranging from 3 to 15 percent higher than the state's average of 16 percent.

This upsurge of elderly patients poses an increase in demand for an array of services, including those that treat chronic health conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. The National Council on Aging estimates that chronic diseases account for about 75 percent of the money spent on health care.

Adding to challenges put on health care providers is the fact that relatively large numbers of soon-to-retire baby boomers are key contributors of their workforce. CHI Mercy Health in Roseburg reports that about 12 percent of its workforce is 60 years old and older, which represents more than 100 employees out of its nearly 1,200 total labor force. And, according to the Oregon Employment Department, about 33 percent of all health care workers on the South Coast are over the age of 55.

Mersey cardiac sonographer Bill Ruegg, age 62, who has worked for the hospital for nearly 20 years in its heart and vascular center, is among the baby boomer health care professionals for which retirement is on the horizon. "Retirement is getting within sight. I've done a lot of retirement planning over the last few years, but have no actual date in mind," Ruegg said. "I'll likely work at least another five to eight years."

Cardiac sonography, which uses advanced imaging to diagnose heart and peripheral vascular (blood vessel) problems in patients, is among the more difficult-to-fill medical technologist positions at Mersey. Years of specialized training and hands-on experience are required. "We've seen substantial



COURTESY PHOTO

Mersey cardiac sonographer Bill Ruegg has worked for the Roseburg hospital for nearly 20 years in its heart and vascular center. The 62-year-old is among the baby boomer health care professionals for which retirement is on the horizon.

growth in the number of patients we treat. Our department has nearly tripled in size," Ruegg said. "Much of the dramatic increase in demand for cardiac services is directly tied to our aging population. The heart, which beats an average of a billion times every 25 years, can take a lot of wear and tear."

Filling workforce gaps

With increases in health care demand, workforce needs are projected to grow, as well. According to Oregon Employment Department forecasts, health care will add about 45,000 new jobs at a 22 percent growth rate through 2022. Many health care providers have already ramped up their recruiting efforts with the added expectation that growing numbers of retirees will soon create yet more vacancies to fill.

"Mersey has expanded services multiple times now in heart care, rehabilitation therapy, orthopedics, imaging and other areas, as well," said Deb Lightcap, director of Human Resources for Mersey. "And, we've added more physicians and staff. But, it has become increasingly difficult to fill positions." Lightcap noted that multiple types of allied health positions are among those that can be hard to fill. Included are specialty nurses, physical and occupational therapists and certain types of radiology and lab technicians.

"We've greatly expanded our recruiting efforts. We started offering signing bonuses and loan

repayment programs, and provide externships for allied health students to attract them to the area and foster a connection prior to their graduation," said Lightcap.

Suzie McDaniel, Chief Human Resources Officer for Bay Area Hospital in Coos Bay, echoed Lightcap. "We're facing huge challenges in recruiting health care professionals to our area," she said. "And, while we've stepped up our efforts considerably and realized success, it's not enough long-term as we continue to expand services and in-fill vacancies as baby boomer employees retire."

"Recruiting continues to be an on-going struggle for us, especially in competing with Portland and other urban areas. What we need is a regional pipeline of skilled health care professionals, which a new allied health medical college can provide," said Lightcap. "Those who train in rural areas are more likely to stay and work in rural areas than those trained in urban areas."

Several years ago, community leaders, business, economic groups and others began exploring options to diversify and renew the region's economy. The idea of building a regional allied health medical college came to the forefront of options in order to capitalize on the recession-proof vitality of health care given its strong presence in the region and the growing need for services.

The college is envisioned to serve multiple

high-demand medical fields by offering advanced training in bachelor and graduate level programs. Graduates would be able to take advantage of job placement programs through the college in partnership with regional healthcare providers. The effort is being spearheaded by The Partnership for Economic Development in Douglas County through Oregonians for Rural Health.

Note: The next article in this series will explore Southern Oregon's growing youth exodus, in addition to workforce training needs. The first article in this series, which ran last Sunday, focused on how expanded health care training can boost Southern Oregon's struggling economy.

Kelly Bantle is vice president for PacWest, a public affairs firm working with Oregonians for Rural Health. She can be reached at bantle@pacwest.com.

POT

From page A1

banned the recreational marijuana business in unincorporated areas, including the Pates' land.

Underscoring the shifting tides Oregon is experiencing even after voters legalized marijuana in 2014, the county's commissioners, after holding public meetings and hearing from several groups, decided Wednesday to allow marijuana cultivation, processing and sales.

In another sign of the shifting tides, voters in Grant County in conservative eastern Oregon and Klamath County in the south will decide in Oregon's primary election on Tuesday whether to repeal their counties' bans after marijuana advocates collected enough signatures.

Shortly after Oregon voters decided to legalize marijuana, the state allowed cities and counties to ban marijuana production and sales where at least 55 percent of voters opposed legalization. Over 100 cities and counties have since "opted out," according to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

The Deschutes County Commissioners said they wrestled with the issue of whether to repeal their county's ban.

"I think that we have a responsibility to do what we can to find a balance, somewhere in the middle of a very divisive issue," Commissioner Tammy Baney said, minutes before the three commissioners voted unanimously to overturn the ban. "Whether we like it or not, this (marijuana) is something that is here."

There had been vocal opponents to marijuana in Deschutes County, famed for its mountains,

its hiking, skiing and other outdoor recreational opportunities and for its microbreweries. Many outdoor enthusiasts have moved here, as well as retirees who have bought up small farm tracts.

Some rural residents worry about the skunky smell of pot plantations and lighting being used in greenhouses at night, among other concerns.

But the commissioners noted that the properties being scooped up by retirees are often intended for farming, and that growers would be producing a new cash crop, one that the Oregon Department of Revenue said generated \$6.8 million in tax payments from January through the end of March alone.

"The commissioners warned against any outbursts before they announced their decision."

But if any marijuana opponents were in the room — largely occupied by a few dozen men and women, many of whom wore "Adopt Cannabis Business Regulations Now" stickers on their shirts — they were silent. "Wow," Julie Austin, operations manager at Cascadia Labs, gaped after the commission voted. The lab she works for, located in the back of a business park in Bend, tests marijuana for potency, pesticides and other items.

"Our business depends on their business," Austin told a reporter, gesturing at marijuana growers who were in the hearing room, one sporting a cowboy hat over his ponytail, another a bright Hawaiian shirt.

Pate, who had served as a member of a marijuana advisory panel to the commission, was more guarded in her reaction.

"It's a very good starting point," she said.

Ex-youth coach gets jail for planning to meet teen for sex

PORTLAND (AP) — A former Banks youth soccer coach has been sentenced to 30 days in jail for arranging to meet a 14-year-old girl in Vancouver for sex. The Oregonian/OregonLive reports (<http://bit.ly/1R26cyj>) that

49-year-old Sean Dotsen pleaded guilty last month to communication with a minor for immoral purposes. On Thursday he was sentenced to 30 days in Clark County jail.

According to court documents, Dotsen responded

to a Craigslist add in January where the poster claimed to be a teen.

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- Joe Kazda

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