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A New Technical College Approved for Eastern Oregon!

Baker Technical Institute receives post-secondary status from the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

BAKER CITY, OR – Baker Technical Institute (BTI) is pleased to announce that it has received final approval and licensure from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to operate as a post-secondary institution. "This has been a long process that took our team nearly a year to complete", says Andrew Bryan, Board Chairman of BTI. "We have been operating for almost seven years now, all along with the goal of achieving collegiate status that will provide even more benefits for our students and communities where we operate. Yes, Eastern Oregon is now the home of the state's newest technical school, and it's unlike any other college the state has to offer. Our goal is to provide a low cost, high quality, efficient, and rapid path to gaining valuable career skills. BTI programs are focused on the trades and industry certifications that are in high demand, and that fit with what a lot of people in our area value and want to do. Now people will not have to incur unnecessary costs and leave our area to be trained for some great careers."

BTI currently offers courses for people pursuing a career in the healthcare industry, heavy equipment operation, welding and manufacturing, environmental cleanup, construction, and their newest program which is truck driving and logistics training. Additionally, BTI has a growing list of apprenticeship opportunities where students earn a wage while they learn in the classroom and on the job. Currently, apprenticeship programs include inside electricians, plant

electricians, medical assistants, and a heavy highway construction pre-apprenticeship program. We plan to have more to come. “We are continually adding programs as industry needs arise,” says Sandy Mitchell, Program Coordinator for BTI. “Over the years, we’ve experienced significant growth, and even during the COVID crisis, last year was no exception. I think it’s a testament to people wanting to try new careers and challenging the traditional post-secondary college route. What we offer at BTI is truly a different kind of education. Our goal is to help people find the career path that is right for them and provide the training they need to be successful in a new profession. Our training programs center around hands-on practical applications that get people hired into the skilled trades as quickly as possible.”

“We have seen an increased number of graduating high school seniors that are choosing to get industry certifications and prepare to enter the workforce. There are also those that choose to seek industry training while pursuing a traditional college degree at the same time. Higher education is rapidly changing to meet the demands of our times. With many colleges offering their courses online, you can train at BTI while continuing to complete your other college work as well.’

Throughout Oregon and much of the nation, career and technical training has been either significantly reduced, or even completely eliminated for many years, which has, in turn, created a serious shortage of skilled workers. The shortage has pushed wages higher than ever before, with fewer people vying for the open positions. According to Doug Dalton, President of BTI, “Students are oftentimes leaving our institution with no debt and job offers that far exceeded their expectations in a career they wanted to pursue. This builds a workforce that fuels our businesses and allows our communities in Eastern Oregon to thrive. We can now do all of this right here.”

BTI will continue to operate from its main campus in Baker City along with a campus in Prineville, Oregon which has also been approved by HECC. In addition to these two locations, BTI will continue to grow its ability to train using mobile platforms. BTI currently provides workforce training throughout Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. “We strongly believe in the advantages of taking the training to other areas and communities. Our mobility has allowed students to participate in courses that they would not be able to take otherwise. Many times people are not in a position to leave their families and their community,” says Dalton. “Instead of the traditional model of expecting students to always come to you, we have turned that concept around, and we go to them when we can. I’m not aware of anybody else doing that.”

For the near future, BTI is going to continue focusing on career training and industry certifications rather than degrees. As a post-secondary institution, BTI may at some point seek degree authorization, but given the demand for industry training, they are choosing to partner with other colleges and universities that provide the opportunities for students to pursue an associate’s or bachelor’s degree in parallel to BTI courses. According to Dalton, “Our goal is not to compete with other colleges, but to provide something that is not being supplied in many regions. We are actually positioned to help other colleges and universities in our area by offering career and technical courses that they may not offer, and to embed industry

certifications within their current degree structures. For example, we have partnered with Eastern Oregon University over the years giving them exactly that. We offer courses at their campus that give students an opportunity for hands-on learning and obtaining industry certification at the same time. "We value our partnership with BTI," said EOU President Tom Insko. "Working together, we created an innovative new EOU academic degree program in Sustainable Rural Systems that is designed to serve the needs of our region while creating more pathways where students gain meaningful real-world experience. This is the type of experiential education that allows students to learn and practice the essential skills employers everywhere are looking for."

Additionally, BTI will continue to provide CTE courses for high school and middle school students in and around Baker County. BTI is also partnering with nine different high schools around the state to help increase their career and technical offerings by using their mobile platforms to travel to the schools and offer career and technical courses at their location. "We are really fortunate to have BTI as part of our program here in Baker City," says Mark Witty, Superintendent of Baker School District 5J. "Our students have access to high-level career and technical courses that would rival any school of any size in the state. BTI has truly raised the bar for us and created a professional environment where high school students are earning certifications before they graduate, given middle students more access to hands-on learning, and even provided our elementary students with STEAM camps and other ways to apply their classroom learning while learning about careers they probably didn't know existed. Our students can exit high school and move into a trade that pays high wages right out of high school!"

We potentially have the best access to high-level career and technical courses in the state. BTI has truly raised the bar for us and created a professional environment where high school students are earning certifications before they graduate, given middle students more access to hands-on learning, and even provided our elementary students with STEAM camps and other ways to apply their classroom learning while learning about careers they probably didn't know existed. This is absolutely key to the success of many of our students as they go forward." BTI currently offers many different courses in various career pathways for high school and middle school students. The career pathways include manufacturing, welding, construction, heavy equipment operation, healthcare, culinary arts, visual arts, agriculture, natural resources, environmental cleanup, engineering, outdoor/recreation, and computer science.

For BTI, post-secondary status has two main benefits. First, it allows students to have more opportunities for financial assistance such as scholarships for courses. And secondly, it gives BTI the ability to partner more easily with other colleges, and at some point, offer college credit along with the industry certifications.

BTI offers courses year-round and has created a simple and straightforward enrollment process. For more information about courses at BTI or to enroll in one of the various other programs visit bakerti.org or call 541-524-2651 to talk to an enrollment specialist or student success coach. If

you are a high school student in or near Baker County and would like to take courses at Baker Technical Institute please contact us directly.

About Baker Technical Institute

Baker Technical Institute (BTI) is a leading provider of Career Technical Education programs focused on developing the next generation of skilled workers, technology innovators, entrepreneurs, and community leaders in rural communities. Headquartered in Baker City, Oregon, BTI offers cutting-edge education and training, leading to certification in high-wage, high-demand careers, such as agricultural sciences, building trades, natural resources/environmental sciences, engineering, health services, welding, heavy equipment operation, truck driving, and manufacturing. For more information, go to bakerti.org