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Youth construction crew building yurts for Willow Lake campground

Campers at Willow Lake will soon have two newly constructed yurts, thanks to the efforts of a youth summer construction crew.

The 2009 Construction Academy is a collaboration between Rogue Community College, Oregon Building Congress, Chris Mathas and Mac Field Boosters. The eight-week academy, which runs through Aug. 14, is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

“This summer academy is a true public-private partnership, operating on funds provided by both industry and public agencies,” said Ralph Henderson, head of RCC’s Construction Technology program.

RCC is helping oversee the project, said Henderson, and college students have helped develop building designs and drawings. Mitch Tucker, a recent graduate of RCC’s Construction Technology program, is supervising the six-person crew.

In addition to pay for all learning and working time, academy participants will be eligible to earn RCC credit. Selection is based on a range of criteria including grade, attendance, and demonstrated motivation. This selection process also involves an interview process based on industry practices. The six academy participants, selected from throughout southern Oregon, are working 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Willow Lake, located 10 miles east of Butte Falls, is at the base of Mt. McLaughlin. The campground is operated by Jackson County.

Taking part in actual construction projects, students apply math, science, communication, and problem-solving skills and develop work ethics, he said. Participants also explore construction career opportunities, including management, architecture, and engineering. They can also identify potential pathways to a construction career from a wide range of post secondary opportunities that include apprenticeship, community college, and four-year university.

Past summers’ projects include a gazebo at a BLM wayside, a roof on a Bureau of Land Management office building, remodeling a nature center meeting facility, and remodel of a Salvation Army Hope House, noted Henderson.

For more information about the Construction Academy, contact Ralph Henderson, department head, RCC Construction Technology, at 245-7907.

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