

S U C C E S S S T O R I E S

Community & Economic Development Program

http://www.lanecounty.org/CAO_EconDev/



Photo courtesy of Oregon Medical Laboratories

- *1 new career center*
- *3 new Medical Technologists*
- *1 new Medical Lab Technician*
- *Wages increase by at least 23%*

Lane County Funds OML's Distance Learning Program

By Heather M. Edwards

“We have more open positions than we can fill,” says [Oregon Medical Laboratories](#) CEO Ran Whitehead. He compares the shortage of medical technologists and medical lab technicians to the well-publicized national shortage of registered nurses.

Enter [Lane Workforce Partnership](#). Acting as a liaison between Lane County's Economic Development Standing Committee and local businesses, they applied for a workforce development grant in 2002 that enabled them to administer and monitor a \$127,824 grant from the EDSC Strategic Projects fund.

This grant launched the Health Education Network, an annual career fair and a distance learning program that bridges the enormous gap between eligible students and available training for workforce improvement. The program allows lab assistants and other students to take classes online from universities and colleges that offer this vital training.

The grant, with approximately \$190,000 in matching funds, will matriculate graduates of the program into employment while offering improved health care services to the community.

“It was absolutely worth my time and money,” says recent graduate Maggie Buck of the distance learning program that earned her the title of Medical Technologist and enabled her to work in the Hematology and Blood Bank departments. She is one of the first four graduates of the distance learning program.

OML offers more than 1,000 medical diagnostic tests to over 5,000 hospitals, doctor's offices, veterinarians and employers. It is the largest reference laboratory in the state.

They exceed two of Lane County's Strategic Goals for developing and maintaining a strong regional economy. They offer competitive family-wage jobs and provide crucial health-care service for Lane County residents. OML projects an 8% increase in employment for 2006 followed by a steady annual increase of 2% per year through 2011.

This year, five new students have enrolled in the distance learning program and state universities in Hawaii and Idaho are modeling their distance learning programs after OML's.

Contact Lane County Economic & Community Development

Peter Thurston, Coordinator at: peter.thurston@co.lane.or.us
(541) 682-4062 or (541) 682-3961 Intern Office

