

Talking points on Higher Levels on Educational Attainment

- The Oregon Business Council and the Governor have set a goal for educational attainment in this state. . Forty percent of Oregonians should complete an associate's degree or some amount of college. Another forty percent should have earned a four-year degree with half of those going on to complete a graduate degree. The remaining twenty percent must have a high school diploma.
- Currently, 28% have a bachelor's or higher, 33% have an AA or some college, 26% have a high school diploma as their highest level of education, and 13% have no high school diploma.
- Raising educational attainment to 40-40-20 would raise the income of Oregonians by \$5 billion a year and increase the revenues the State has available to fund its services by \$350 million a year. (According to OBC)
- The US Department of Labor warns that the fastest growing jobs require education beyond high school with fully 32% of them calling for an AA degree and another 23% of them setting their lowest acceptable education level at a bachelor's degree.
- Oregon's Workforce Investment Board says Oregon will need 700,000 skilled workers by 2014 to fill openings created by growth and retirements.
- In 1950, 60% of the jobs available were for unskilled labor. In 2000, only 15% didn't require high skills and those jobs rarely offered a family wage.
- The 2000 U.S. Census also showed that in Oregon almost 37% of folks between 45 and 65 years old held an AA or higher but only 33% of those between 25 and 34 did. Our younger population is not as well educated as those approaching retirement.
- In 2000, only 11 percent of all bachelor's degrees in the United States were in natural science or engineering, far below the world's average of 23 percent and about one-fifth of China's 50 percent.
- There are currently some 124 approved professional/technical programs offered on community college campuses but there isn't enough capacity to meet the goal. For example, there is room for only 1 in 6 qualified nursing applicants statewide and we know we are facing a serious nursing shortage.
- None of us know what the future will bring but if business leaders in Oregon and across the nation are right, we must prepare now. The goal of 40-40-20 may not reflect the right percentages, but it is surely a move in the right direction.