Rogue Valley Times
Sept. 13, 2026

RCC grants fast-track career training for healthcare, electric vehicle tech

Published 10:06 am Sunday, September 13, 2026

By James Sloan



1/2

Three programs in dental assisting, emergency medical services and medical assisting will be redesigned from the grant. (RCC/Courtesy)

Rogue Community College has been awarded two grants totaling $150,000 that it will use to develop short-term, stackable credentials in healthcare and electric vehicle safety.

Both $75,000 grants came from the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and the accelerated programs will create pathways to advanced certificates and degrees while preparing students for immediate employment by supporting the development of programs created in partnership with regional employers, a news release said.

The changes will take place in the 2026-27 academic year and will include equipment purchases, faculty preparation, curriculum development and more.

Rogue Community College staff expect the new programs to begin in fall 2027.

Three programs in dental assisting, emergency medical services and medical assisting will be redesigned from the grant, and some programs that originally required two or three academic terms will be condensed to intensive 11-week credentials teaching skills students will need in the workforce.

Regional healthcare providers and workforce partners will help shape and implement the new pathways to make sure they reflect current industry expectations.

“This investment will expand access to accelerated, high-quality healthcare training that prepares students for in-demand careers while helping meet the urgent workforce needs of our region,” said Rusty Riis, dean of healthcare and education with RCC. “By strengthening pathways in dental assisting, emergency medical services and medical assisting, we are creating more opportunities for students to earn valuable credentials and move quickly into family-wage employment.”

The development of a new electric vehicle safety credential, which will stack into RCC’s quick lube training and broader transportation technology pathways, will be supported by one of the grants.

The program will integrate electric and hybrid vehicle safety competencies into an accelerated training program for entry-level transportation technicians, according to the release.

Graduates will be prepared for positions in quick lube, express maintenance, dealership service and fleet support that require foundational vehicle maintenance skills and an understanding of high-voltage hazards, school officials said.

The program is in response to projected demand for automotive service technicians in the region, which is expected to grow by 12% in Jackson and Josephine counties between 2025 and 2035.

“High-voltage diagnostic tools, specialized safety gear and modern training equipment represent a substantial investment for any technical education program,” said Stephen Phelps, dean of instruction and student engagement with RCC. “We are deeply grateful to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for this grant opportunity, which helps bridge that cost barrier. With this support and the expertise of our regional partners, we can provide students with access to industry-standard EV equipment and create an accelerated pathway into our local clean-energy economy while aligning education with the needs of today’s workforce.”

The college will develop the program in partnership with regional workforce partners ranging from independent employers to dealership-level operations, and the partners will advise on curriculum, validate entry-level competencies, evaluate student readiness and help guide implementation, according to the release.

Reach reporter James Sloan at james.sloan@rv-times.com.