

Vocational Training Draws in More Students

Written by Karen Massie, Reporter

There's always a waiting list of about 100 students who want to get into the wood shop at Rio Linda High School.

"We learn from the beginning foundation, floor framing, wall framing, roof framing," said Randy Roberts. He teaches woodworking, which also includes training on how to make cabinets and furniture.

Roberts said he's glad to hear that Gov. Schwarzenegger's May revised budget plan includes \$175 million for vocational education. Roberts says students need to learn skills that are in great demand. "I have people calling me all the time saying 'hey I can't get a cabinet shop can you build this piece of furniture for me.' If I have time and some students that can work on it I'll do it."

Studies show only 33 percent of high school graduates go on to attend college. Roberts said career technical training will help the remaining 66 percent of students find jobs.

"I thinking about what I want to do with my life," said Larry Stilley, 16, as he cut out a skim board to ride in shallow water. "I made my first one this morning. This is my second one and I think I'll paint a checkerboard

pattern on part of it."

Stilley hopes to become a carpenter and admits this class rejuvenated his interest in school. "It certainly makes me come on time. And it gives me something to look forward to. I'm not all for the learning and stuff. I know I have to but I'd rather be in this class learning something in here," said Stilley.

Jed Gibson believes he'll use his carpentry skills to earn money while he's going to college. "I want to be an engineer but my dad has a carpentry business. While I'm at college, I can whip me up a cabinet or something and sell it because cabinets are in demand for all the new houses that are being built."

The governor has suggested that California spend \$100 million on vocational equipment. Wood-working students at Rio Linda High School still use saws that were installed in 1962.

"Thankfully, those machines are still good. But I have 100 students a year and these machines get used just as much as they would in an industrial shop," said Roberts. "So, they always need maintenance. And we can always use some extra cash here and there to maintain them and buy new machines."

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