



LORI BAUMANN



**Journey-level Laborer
Oregon Laborers**

JATC (MA 1015) Cement Mason Oregon
Tradeswomen Inc. graduate

What do you do when your friend invites you to a physical training/work camp for Laborers? You say, “yes.”

“It sounded hard as hell, so I signed up” said Journey-level Laborer Lori Baumann. Starting with a Pre-Apprenticeship at **Oregon Tradeswomen**, Lori gained the experience she needed to apply for a Laborer Apprenticeship.

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Laborers can be skilled in many areas, but with an apprenticeship, you don’t need to start out as a Jack (or Jill) of All Trades. “I never knew a single darn thing about mechanical equipment,” said Lori. “but I learned to change spark plugs—not scary, turns out—and I learned to back up with a trailer. Kind of scary, but feels great to be more comfortable with it.”

Looking back, Lori feels great about the opportunities an apprenticeship has provided her. “It’s an amazing opportunity to get paid to learn and get on-the-job experience,” she said. “The pay is good and appropriately based on growth and experience. And the training is surprisingly fun.”

Lori’s advice on choosing a trade and getting started? “Be anything you want,” she said. “Be a mason. Be a carpenter. Be a plumber. If you really want variety, be a laborer. Find out what it takes to apply. Take it one step at a time and fill out the paperwork, take the tests, and show up. Just apply. It’s super easy.”

“I’m proud of every job I’ve done,” said Lori. There are some projects that stand out in Lori’s memory, including her first job at Bonneville Dam and her work on the historic Oregon City Bridge. “I will always remember showing up on my first day and being led under that bridge, climbing up onto a platform on the side of a column, and being handed a chipping gun. There was just a bridge in front of me and water below me, and I was so grateful to be there. The men I worked with were so open to teaching me everything I touched. I had great mentors on that job.”

After it’s all said and done, Lori is “totally happy” with her career. She just wishes she had started earlier in life. “I’d try so many different trades before I retired.” We think you’ve still got plenty of time, Lori!

What has Lori gained from her apprenticeship program?

- A pension
- First time homeownership
- Healthcare
- Camaraderie
- Calluses, which are “actually kind of rad.”

Q: WHAT DOES A LABORER DO?

A: Laborers may be skilled and unskilled workers with duties as varied as clearing timber and brush, removing demolished materials from a job site, placing and vibrating concrete, landscaping, installing pipe, handling the materials for other trades workers, or using explosives to demolish buildings. Laborers are needed on all types of construction projects such as highways, bridges, tunnels, large buildings, sanitation, and residential, and perform work for the duration of the project.