



## Students learn to think like brokers and developers

### Commercial Real Estate Women Career Day takes place at Portland's Yeon Building

Posted: 04:00 AM PST Friday, March 6, 2009

BY TYLER GRAF

For one day, the first-floor space at the Yeon Building was so full it could have been perceived as being completely leased.

But the occupants, more than 80 in all, were actually high school students.

As part of the 14th annual Commercial Real Estate Women Career Day on Thursday, the students were tasked with looking at their 50,000-square-foot meeting space from the perspective of a broker or a developer.

The goals at the all-day event, at least hypothetically, were to redevelop, market and then lease the space.

Separated into groups of 10, the students competed to write the best redevelopment concept for the space; judging was by a panel of real estate professionals. The space was located at 530 S.W. Fifth Ave. and was formerly occupied by **Sherman Clay & Co.**, a piano store.

Though they may be real estate novices, some of the teens proved quick studies of the basics.

"We need to (brainstorm) something that's not around here," said Tualatin High School student Camille Kennedy. Across the street, the neon sign for Red Star Tavern & Roast House shines even during the day, a visible reminder to the students that another bar or restaurant on the same block could oversaturate the market. "We're thinking this space should be something retail."

Prior to putting on their developers' hats, the students attended presentations from a cross section of industry professionals, including: Kara Pearson, associate broker for HSM Pacific Realty; Lisa Walker, property manager for **Beardsley Building Development**, which owns the Yeon Building; and architect Richard Manning, a principal at Green Building Services.

Sam Barlow High School student Katelyn Mackay said she learned the most from Manning, who explained the environmental factors that play a role in making decisions about buildings.

"Since the sixth grade, I've wanted to be an architect," Mackay said.

The event's turnout was the best it's been, said CREW Career Day Co-Chair Peggy Niekirk. But, she added, more could be done in the future to grow the event.

For one thing, only one of the six schools represented at the event is based in Portland: Jefferson High School. The others are suburban schools.

"We'd love to encourage Portland schools to be more involved," she said.

Organizers of the event, including Niekirk, want all local students to know what employment opportunities exist in commercial real estate.

"(These kids) have an opportunity to discover that there are many different aspects to commercial real estate," said CREW President Jill Laney, an attorney with **Cosgrave Vergeer Kester**. "And we hope they have an enjoyable time thinking like a developer."