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Fort Morgan Times

329 Main Street

Fort Morgan, CO 80701

(970) 867-5651

Fax: (970) 867-7448

Email:

fntimes@fntimes.com

Danford Realty

www.danfordrealty.com

Local News

Jobs galore at job fair

Folks swarm to 'Oceans of Opportunities' booths

By DAN BARKER

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Times Staff Writer

Plenty of people swarmed to and around about 50 booths at the Oceans of Opportunities job fair at Fort Morgan High School Wednesday.

Teachers were letting their students out to register with the Eastern Colorado Workforce Center and view the hundreds of job opportunities on display. Some teens came during their lunch hours, too, said Dale Cecil, lead worker for the eastern region.

The goal was to bring together employers and those seeking jobs to make the connection easier for everyone involved, he said.

These kinds of fairs continue because they are so successful in meeting the needs on both sides, Cecil said.

Although there is a lot of effort involved in creating a job fair, when all of his staff look at a roomful of people and know they are connecting, it is very rewarding, he said.

Those who claim there are no good jobs in the area need to take a look at these options.

Employers ranged from Cargill Meat Solutions and Leprino Foods, the big ones for Morgan County, to Bonanza Ford-Mercury, Fire River Cattle Feed, Avon, Advanced Services Inc, which is trying to attract people out of state, and the Job Corps.

Leprino is starting general laborers at \$12.70 an hour and machine operators at \$15.40 an hour to start. Of course, they have to be willing to work the night shift, said a spokesperson.

While Kay Jan is hurting from the agricultural economy due to well shutdowns, it would hire people with technical training today, said general manager Monty Thomas.

He was there looking for young people willing to get the training and offering scholarships, he said.

"It's an awesome career," Thomas said. "The demand is great."

ASInc, an employment service with offices in several areas, says the same thing. Representative Wanda Brogren wants to lure people to Sidney, Neb., where "there are more jobs than people," she said.

Those who have machinist or welding skills are particularly in demand, and that holds true everywhere. They are starting at \$14 an hour in Sidney, Brogren said.

Even those hired for general labor there are getting \$10 an hour to start for inexperienced workers, she said.

Sidney does not have a lot of housing, but the old army depot was renovated for apartments, and she knows someone who rented a three-bedroom apartment for \$450 a month with



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utilities included, Brogren said.

There are also always some jobs in Greeley, Brogren said.

Of course, there are jobs closer to home.

Nursing homes almost always need nurses and certified nursing aides.

Sunset Manor human resources coordinator Esther Andersen said the Brush facility is looking for people to hire in those positions right now, and Yuma Life Care Center charge nurse Julie Walsh said the same.

Sunset also needs a speech therapist, a beautician and a medical records specialist as well as housekeeping help, Andersen said.

Fort Morgan's Safeway is looking for those who want a supermarket career, said assistant manager Janice Magnuson.

It's been a long time since Safeway was really looking for people. These are entry-level positions for carry-out service, fuel station clerk, in the bakery and in the deli, she said.

The key is Safeway wants people who will stay, Magnuson stressed.

The Brush Correctional Facility, which houses women inmates, needs correctional officers, a registered nurse, a licensed professional counselor, a case manager and an administrative assistant, said Cher Gettman, chief of security.

Eastern Colorado Services for the Developmentally Disabled in Fort Morgan needs direct care providers to assist mentally retarded adults in their daily activities or in the workshop on Burlington Avenue, said spokesperson Dawn Lopez.

Diggers Diner in Brush is always looking for employees to cook and wait, said owner Jeff Marcus.

The Bijou Irrigation System needs someone to run river diversion structures, said office manager Denice Wagner.

That means running the canals which feed the reservoir and send water to farmers. All anyone needs is a clean driving record and a willingness to live in a rural spot, since it means living in a home furnished by the company which is located between Kersey and Masters, she said.

Stevens Transport is offering both training and employment for truck drivers. Its corporate headquarters is in Texas, but there is a center in Keenesburg, said Director Charles Tweedy.

Ackley Building Center in Brush is not hiring right now, but is looking for people who might want to start in the summer to do deliveries and work in the lumber yard, said manager George Kenner.

Schwan's Home Service has a need for route drivers to deliver frozen food products to people's homes, according to information at its booth.

Those 16-24 with a flair for adventure can join the Job Corps, which will insure the person gets a high school diploma or GED and learns a trade while getting free travel and free room and board on one of the campuses, said spokeswoman Cindy Cindrich.

"It's all on us," she said.

It has been funded by the federal government since 1964. Young people can learn trades like information technology, business office technology, electrician, plumbing, auto repair, carpentry, cement masonry, welding, CNA, medical assistant, dental assistant, culinary arts and more, Cindrich said.

The program has a record of finding 91 percent of its students jobs after graduation, she said.

For those who want their own business or need to stay at home, there is the opportunity of starting their own online travel agency through Your Travel Biz, said Michelle Staley of Akron.

She started her own since she wants to be a stay-at-home mom. It is as simple as putting together a Web site and letting travelers pay a commission for the person to book flights and hotels, she said.

The company even offers health benefits after a person gets to a certain level of production, which is something many standard jobs do not offer, and YTB Travel is a publicly traded company, Staley said.

Owners can also travel at discounted rates, she said.

These were only a small percentage of what was on hand Tuesday.

Those who want applications for these companies can contact:

Leprino at 867-9351; Kay Jan at 867-8688; Sunset Manor at 842-2825; Brush Correctional Facility at 842-0800; Ackley Building Center at 842-4832; Bijou Irrigation at 867-2222; Job Corps at 484-8992; Stevens Transport at 303-536-9845; ASInc at 308-254-1090.

Safeway requires an online application, and there is a kiosk for it in the store, but people can stop in to chat about jobs, Magnuson said.

The workforce center in Fort Morgan also works continuously with many of the companies and people can sign up there, Cecil said.

— Contact Dan Barker at business@fmtimes.com or 970-324-1254.

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