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Summer jobs for teens – it's not all fast food

by Sharon
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Teenagers looking for summer work can get help with job-hunting at the Mesa County Workforce Center. The governor summer job hunt program is open to people age 14 to 21.

Program coordinator Brandon Straw estimated there are about 300 or more jobs currently available for the 17-18-year-old group.

For 16-year-olds he figures there are approximately 30 jobs listed in the workforce center's system. And for those 14 and older there are jobs building trails and mending fence with the Western Colorado Conservation Corps, Straw said.

And those are just the jobs that employers list with the workforce center.

Straw said retail and fast food industries have jobs open and available to the younger teens.

It's up to employers to list a minimum age when they place a job listing with the center. Many employers are unfamiliar with Colorado's labor laws which allow 14- and 15-year-olds to work 40-hour weeks when school's not in session, Straw said.

There are many job openings for that age group in Mesa Mall, Straw said.

"The best thing for 14- and 15-year-olds is to ask around, look for the 'Now Hiring' signs. There are a lot of those around town," Straw said. He also recommended kids call businesses that they have a particular interest in.

Older teens and those who have a driver's license have more choices for employment, including landscaping, building, and teachers' assistants. Currently there are also positions working in a state park, doing hotel housekeeping, and warehouse stocking.

"There are a wide variety of things," Straw said. "Most are part-time, the hours are usually flexible. Employers are often able to work around a (kid's) schedule."

Wages vary anywhere from the minimum wage of \$6.85 an hour to \$9 or more. One local restaurant is looking for a dishwasher and bakers, starting at \$10.

The first step in landing a job via the workforce center is to fill out an application available at the center, where applicants list their interests and experience.

Then Straw will call the person to set up an appointment. There, he runs a job search through the computer, attempting to match skills and interests with available jobs.

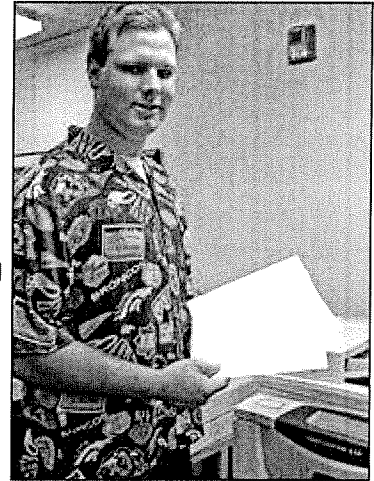
Straw shows teens how to create a resume and reviews interviewing skills with the teens.

"We help them create a resume right here. By the end of (20 minutes) they have a pretty good resume that they didn't even know they had the ability to create," Straw said.

The workforce center is open Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The center's resource room has computers with Internet access and word processing capabilities. There's also copy machines, and resume paper, as well as newspaper classified job listings. The workforce center is located at 2897 North Ave. and can be reached at 248-0871.

Brandon Straw, coordinator of the governor summer job hunt program at the Mesa County Workforce Center, helps teens create resumes and find job openings listed at the center.
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