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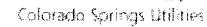
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## Workforce works to connect youth, employers

BY W.R. HAYDEN - TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 2007 9:41 AM MDT

With school over for the summer, the Arkansas Valley's youth may be looking to obtain a summer job to earn some money and kill some time while establishing a good working track record early on.

The Colorado Workforce Center, located in Rocky Ford with a branch in La Junta, can be a prime mover to help those looking for employment.

The Colorado Workforce can be a priceless guide for those looking to enter the working world for the first time. The Workforce offers pamphlets and guides, resume and interview tips, and even holds job workshops at local schools to get students familiar with the working world. "This is the way we develop a workforce that will help our companies and local economy remain strong," said Summer Youth Coordinator Marilyn Marinelli.

With the recent minimum wage increase that is slowly going into effect, it is important for employees to take their jobs seriously and prove their worth. The increase in minimum wage will mean companies may be forced to cut back on expenses — including employees — to compensate. After finding the right job, it is imperative applicants continue to do their best to keep that job.

Rocky Ford Workforce supervisor Betty Velasquez stresses the importance of looking and acting professionally both when turning in an application and before going to an interview. "It's always a good idea to be prepared," she said. "There are some employers that will interview you on the spot."

Workforce employee Nick Newby is in charge of connecting employers with potential employees. Newby talks with employers to find what positions are needed, and connects work force members with jobs they might be interested in.

"I work directly with the students who come in, register them and talk to employers who might hire them," Newby explained. Popular positions for young people include clerking jobs, fast food and restaurant workers, lifeguards, cashiers, stockers, day labor workers, and telemarketers. Newby mostly works with students who have had little or no work experience and helps them build up a base for stepping into the working world.

Newby also stresses the importance of being prepared and professional, and advises potential employees to show confidence and enthusiasm. "Anytime you can talk directly to an employer, it shows initiative," he said.

Newby urges anyone interested in entering the work force to go to the Rocky Ford office any time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. "We've had a lot of people come down, but I know there's a lot of students left in the valley looking for work," he said.

Those interested in registering or working with the Colorado Workforce can do so by visiting the Rocky Ford office or online at [www.connectingcolorado.org](http://www.connectingcolorado.org). The site contains resources for both employers looking for workers to fill positions and job seekers looking for employers.