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## Expo Connects Job Seekers to Employers



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Manufacturers and health-care companies were among those looking for workers.  
Sept. 23, 2011 7:02 a.m.

By *George Nelson*

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio -- Attendance at Job Expo 2011 appeared to be lighter than in prior years -- about 3,500 -- but the numbers are open to interpretation, says Bert Cene, executive director at Youngstown & Columbiana Training Association.

Two years ago, with the meltdown in the economy, the annual event turned out about 5,000 job seekers. "You could say that things have gotten better," an optimistic interpretation, Cene said, "or people are discouraged, which would be the pessimistic side."

Also down this year was the number of companies looking for employees, 70 compared to 90 in 2010.

Nevertheless, Cene said, "We've got a nice mix."

Companies were recruiting employees to fill everything from entry-level posts to more highly skilled advanced positions. Manufacturers participating in the job expo included TMK IPSKO in Brookfield, V&M Star in Youngstown and Thomas Steel Strip Corp. in Warren. Health care providers such as Humility of Mary Health Partners in Youngstown were also present as well as and retailers including Giant Eagle and Walmart.

"We have everything from information technology jobs to the professional nursing positions that we need to fill so there's a whole gamut of opportunities," said Rick Noel, personnel manager at Salem Community Hospital, Salem. He characterized Thursday's pool of job seekers as "an interesting mix of people," including a lot of people with degrees.

"We get a lot of people who have the required certification and the requirements -- so that's good for us," Noel said. "Then you also have a diverse group of people who have lost their jobs in recent months because of downsizing of companies. A lot of times we try to find a place for them to restructure their work environment, something they haven't done before."

Rocky Nittoli, human resources manager for GE Energy, Twinsburg, came to the job fair looking for candidates to fill skilled positions, such as mechanical and electrical engineers, as well as welders. His company decided to exhibit at the Job Expo based on the regional presence of companies such as General Motors Co., Delphi and Alcoa. "We came here seeking some qualified candidates," he said.



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What he found was a "very diverse" mix of candidates. "They're all over the board. We've got people who are interested in sales, people interested in engineering, manufacturing roles, a little bit of everything," he remarked. "We've had a pretty diverse talent base and what's great is we're part of a very large business so we're able to steer them to [[the company's career website](#)] to check out all of our other openings."

Anderson-Dubose Co., Solon, was at the job fair to find candidates to fill warehouse, driver and administrative positions for the new warehouse it recently broke ground on in Lordstown.

"We're very impressed with the people we're seeing -- well; educated, well presented, asking great questions, very interested in what we have to offer," said Jim Polen, human resource professional.

Colleen Chamberlain, human resources administrator and specialist with Xaloy Inc., which has operations in Boardman and New Castle, Pa., said she is looking at people who can grow with the company, which manufactures screws, barrels and industrial rollers. The company has openings in sales, plant floor, marketing and information technology.

"A lot of it is really potential," she explained. "We're looking for somebody who has experience in sales or engineering or IT but we're also looking for somebody that has the ability to move up in the organization. As our organization grows -- we're in an expansion phase right now -- we need people who we can fast-track into different positions and still be able to back-fill the other ones."

After only an hour, Chamberlain said she had identified "four or five people" to take a closer look at. "We've had some excellent candidates come though already," she remarked.

Job seekers ranges from fairly recent entries to the job pool to veteran workers looking for a fresh start, all facing a difficult job market.

Jamie Fabian of Canfield, who has a bachelor's degree in communications, is looking for a job in communications or sales.

"It's tough. Its difficult. It can be very taxing but you just need to persevere, keep at it," he said. He spoke to 10 potential employers and said they were "very receptive."

Gary Armstrong of Kinsman has been unemployed since March 2010,

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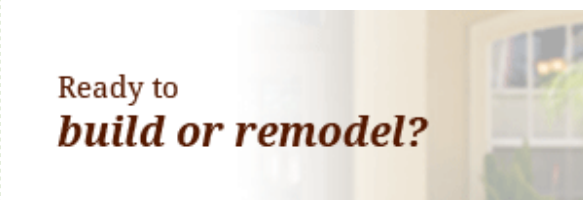
- Benjamin Franklin



after 37 years as Denman Tire Corp., Leavittsburg.

"It seems like [employers] don't want to take a chance with the older people," he lamented.

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