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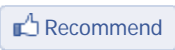

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Regional Job Expo Set Thursday in Youngstown

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For 11 years, Don Senne has run Brass Accents in Salem, which sells custom-made finished metal products like brass door accessories.

Most of his business comes through the internet, and for the second year in a row, he's got the "Help Wanted" sign out.

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"I'm looking for laborers, I'm looking for manufacturing help, I'm looking for administrative help," Senne said.

He said he is looking for up to four new employees and now has a dozen people working for him. He said he is looking for people who are willing to stay with the company in exchange for providing some on-the-job training and experience.

"I could hire temps. I could get warm bodies in here. That's not what I'm looking for. I'm looking for somebody who is willing to learn how to finish metal, how to do machining, how to pack orders and do sales calls, etc. I'm looking for a wide variety of skills and I am willing to train," Senne said.

Brass Accents will be one of dozens of employers from the Mahoning and Shenango Valleys looking to meet potential new hires Thursday at the annual Penn-Ohio Regional Job Expo at the Covelli Centre in downtown Youngstown. Senne said as the Salem area's economy has picked up, the pool of available labor has been dwindling.

"I need to get out of Salem. I need to get to Austintown and Canfield and places I don't normally get to," Senne said.

Recent figures from the state of Ohio show unemployment has been declining. Last month, it was down more than a full percentage point from August the year before.

"The key to a strong recovery, instead of the very weak recovery the state of Ohio has been seeing, is increases in manufacturing," said economic analyst George Zellers of Cleveland.

Zellers, who tracks the numbers of new unemployment filings around the state, said the Youngstown-Warren area has shown what he calls "job growth" for eight weeks in a row. But he also admits there's still a long way to go, saying there are still 26,400 unemployed workers in the Mahoning Valley.

And that could be one more reason why organizers of Thursday's Job Expo are expecting a very large crowd.

The Penn-Ohio Interstate Region Job Expo is the official name of Thursday's event and will offer the chance for perspective employees to meet would-be employers to make that all-important first impression.

On Wednesday afternoon, workers with both the local Ohio One Stop offices as well as Career Link from Pennsylvania were setting up tables and signs.

Experts offered some good advice to job seekers, including to make sure your appearance won't end up hurting your chances.

"You should always dress one level above the job you're looking for," said Gloria Mathews of One Stop.

Experts said job seekers should be prepared when they meet that potential employer for the first time. Mathews suggests having an "opening line" ready, to not only introduce yourself, but also give an idea of how you can help the company grow and succeed.

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The Job Expo runs from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday.

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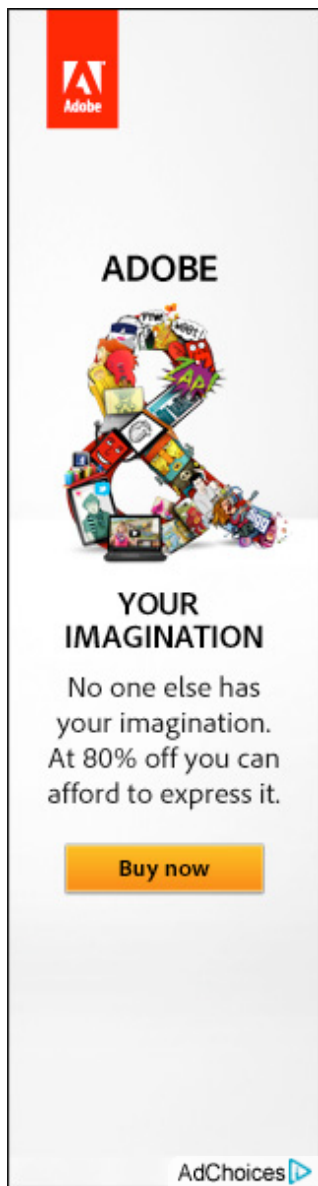



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