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Ohio-Penn Job Expo draws 3,500

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Photo by Jessica Kanalas

Kevin Young, left, a maintenance supervisor for

By Karl Henkel

khenkel@vindy.com

YOUNGSTOWN

Much has been made about the Mahoning Valley's 9.7 percent unemployment rate.

But the 3,500 residents who attended Thursday's

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V&M Star, speaks with Michael Cook, 37, of Youngstown about job opportunities at the company at the sixth annual Ohio-Penn Interstate Job Expo at the Covelli Centre.

sixth annual Ohio-Penn Interstate Job Expo at the Covelli Centre each had unique stories.

Not everyone who attended was unemployed.

Some — such as Mike Canzonetta, 42, of Warren — already have a job.

He works as a security guard but said he's interested in finding new work.

He stopped by the V&M Star exhibit looking for a general labor or maintenance position.

"I just want to advance my career, let people know I'm here and that I want to work," he said.

Others looked at training providers.

Aaron Scott, 20, of Youngstown visited the New Castle School of Trades exhibit.

He's a student at Eastern Gateway Community College but said he wants to keep all of his career options open.

Scott, a former door-to-door vacuum salesman and dressed in a raspberry-colored suit, was eager to visit as many potential job trainers and employers as possible.

He said he's looked at 30 to 45 potential employers in Boardman during recent months, and almost every one of them directed him to apply via the Internet.

"If you're just online, they can't see you," Scott said.

Scott discussed jobs related to the Marcellus and Utica shales with an admissions representative at NCST. A report out of the Ohio Statehouse this week said the Utica Shale could result in as many as 200,000 new jobs for



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Barbara Slaven, admissions representative, said NCST works closely with employers of shale-related jobs, a big plus for the school's students.

"As people become more aware of the Marcellus [and Utica] shales, they realize the need for training and credentials," she said.

Eric Munnell, operations supervisor at V&M, which is building a \$650 million mill for pipes used in shale drilling, agreed.

"Trade schools are vital," he said. "The experience people get there is tremendous. Most of our hourly employees came from trade schools."

Many, however, were simply looking to jump back into the work force.

Daniel Allshouse, 49, of Austintown has been unemployed for two years after he lost his job at Big Lots.

It was his second straight trip to the job expo.

Despite sending out dozens of resumes during the past two years, he hasn't found a new employer — yet.

“You have to have the right skills,” said Allshoure, who has a degree in broadcasting. “From what I’ve experienced, if you don’t have the skills then you’re wasting your time.”

He said he was more confident with his visit than he was last year but still has a negative outlook on the Valley’s job prospects.

“People who have jobs right now are the lucky ones,” he said.

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