

It's Time for a Job Fair

Workforce, workforce and then some more workforce. This is the hot topic at the meetings of manufactures, economic developers, school systems, service providers and any company or business looking for workers. The problem is not just isolated to Duncan or Oklahoma but reaches across the international borders. The shortage for skilled workforce is real! And in addition to the shortage of workforce, businesses must also realize that multiple generational eras are working together and each of them approaches their job differently.

Let's start with ways we can assist area businesses with their workforce demands. Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation (DAEDF) is sponsoring a job fair for the area businesses on Thursday, November 15 at the Simmons Center from 9am – 6pm. Our organization sponsored a similar event in April. At the April event 23 companies were actively looking for employees. Most of these companies had job descriptions available for those looking to enhance their opportunities for employment. The event brought 530 people from a variety of communities in Southwestern Oklahoma.

Since we held the community's first job fair in April, we have made many changes to the overall approach of hosting a job fair. In the beginning, our purpose was simply to find employees for our local companies. During the event, we heard comments from those attending the job fair stating that "I did not know Duncan had so many different businesses". We have since realized that to provide employees, we must promote our local companies to the employees and develop our own workforce.

Our thought process led DAEDF staff to putting the needs of our businesses and school system together. From this we have transformed the event into a combination Career Fair/Job Fair. The morning time frame will be held for students from each of the schools who are a part of the Red River Technology Center system and will include a formal career planning presentation, as well as allow these students to go through the job fair area and speak with the participating businesses. The lack of previous communication between businesses and the future generation of employees has created a void in the delivery of quality workers. It is important that the future workforce see what types of companies are in the area and the skills needed to perform those jobs. The afternoon portion of the event will be a traditional job fair.

To add excitement to this event we have Team Thunder bring their dragster to demonstrate the different skill-sets needed to build this machine. To inspire the youth, we will announce two competitive events that will be held at the Job Fair next April. Both events involve creativity, engineering and planning, and to make it worth while there will be cash prizes given to the top winners.

Companies from the area should realize that their participation in this event not only allows them to attract employees now, but also plants seeds for future workforce. In order to assure skilled employees continue to be available, businesses must make themselves known to our youth and take an active part in growing their own future workforce. The job fair is of no cost to local businesses, and if you would like to reserve a booth or give a presentation to students at the career fair, please contact Christy Dixon at 580-255-9675, or through email at christy@ok-duncan.com.

Make sure you play your part in keeping the community clean and vibrant so others may see what a wonderful place Duncan is and observe our quality of life. If you have questions, I can be contacted at the Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation office at 580-255-9675, or just send me an e-mail at lyle@ok-duncan.com. Visit our website at www.ok-duncan.com to let us know if you want to come home to Duncan and are looking for a job opportunity.