

Signs show way to new career

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Gil Harrison has landed a job. If you don't know Gil, you might know of him. Harrison, who grew up in Troy and now lives in Sylvan Lake, is the flesh behind a large sign posted off I-75 near Big Beaver for three months.

"Please give me hope for '83 and find it in your heart to hire me," the message reads.

Harrison starts work this week as a

computer sales representative. "I might as well be part of the future now," he said.

The sign and resulting publicity brought Harrison and his new employer together, Harrison said.

Harrison, 32, was laid off from the parts department of an auto dealership Dec. 18, 1980. "It was a wonderful Christmas present," he said. He hasn't held a steady job since — until now.

At first, Harrison and his wife shared the financial burden, but the couple di-

voiced about a year ago. His unemployment played a part in the break-up, he conceded.

"IT DIDN'T help things too much at all. I wasn't the greatest guy to be around without a job."

Harrison has been on public assistance for about a year. It takes care of mortgage payments and utilities, but doesn't leave a lot of spending money.

He tried to run his own painting business for a while, but that fizzled when

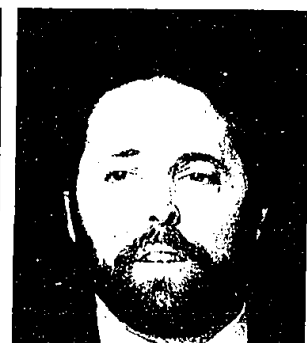
too many other people — many also unemployed — decided to go into that line, he said.

"I went from utility companies to parts stores to dealerships and even party stores."

All with no luck.

Harrison finally decided to take his case directly to the public. He did it in a big way, too, by constructing a sign measuring 12-by-8 feet.

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STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Gil Harrison has been struggling to find a steady job since he was laid off in December of 1980. It's been a long road, but now it looks like he's found what he's been looking for.

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