

## Annual struggle

# Tough road ahead for teens in the job market

By Bill Casper  
staff writer

State and local employment service officials say it's going to be tough for youths to land summer jobs this year. Their advice: Start the job-search early and keep on plugging.

With an estimated 500,000 student job seekers flooding the already-tight employment market, jobs will not be plentiful and people will have to scrape to find work, said Don McGhee, information specialist for the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC).

"The most important piece of advice I can give anyone looking for a job is for that person to get the word out to anyone and everyone. Most job leads occur that way."

The dismal unemployment figures he cited make painfully clear the uphill battle all job hunters face.

"THE MOST recent figure released in April showed the state's total unemployment rate at 12.2 percent and it will be worse this summer when the half-million students pour into job hunting," McGhee noted. "With few exceptions around the state, teen-agers in the metropolitan Detroit area will be the most pressed in finding summer work."

Projected summer figures for youths between the ages of 16 and 19 indicate an unemployment rate of 35.5 percent, McGhee said. And he said finding a job will be harder for non-whites than for whites in the same age category.

An estimated 58.8 percent of non-white teens will be out of work this summer, compared to about 30.8 percent of whites who won't be able to find summer jobs, he said.

"The result of such high unemployment has significantly reduced the

number of typical or traditional summer jobs, now being filled by laid-off auto workers," said McGhee. "They're taking whatever job they can get, including the lower paying service-type jobs, such as employment at fast food restaurants, which traditionally have been available to students."

"Layoffs in the auto and auto-related factories have virtually eliminated another major area of traditional summer youth employment," McGhee continued. "In the past, students were hired for factory work to fill vacancies created by vacations, but union contracts require that laid-off factory workers be the first to be recalled to fill any vacancies."

Because of unemployment combined with a strained state budget and federal cutbacks reducing government-funded job opportunities, students are going to have to put more effort into their job-hunting efforts this summer, McGhee said.

"BECAUSE THE job market is so tight, students should start looking for employment now. Although the employer may not be hiring now, many like to conduct their summer-job interviews in advance. "Even if they employer is not hiring, leave an application or resume so you are on file just in case a job unexpectedly opens up," said McGhee. "Students may have to be less selective about the type of work and salary they're looking for," he said.

"They should have some idea of what kind of work they want, but they also must be flexible, taking into consideration job availability. They should be persistent despite rejections and prepared when they apply or go for an interview."

Job seekers may have to redirect their searches toward non-traditional

or lesser-known employers or become more creative in devising self-employment opportunities, McGhee said.

"I suggest checking a junk yard," he said. "Who thinks to look for work at a junk yard? The point is job hunters tend to look for work at the larger, established, well-known, very visible corporations where competition is tougher, while the smaller businesses are often forgotten."

"Some may have to start their own summer business like painting, cleaning, yard work or baby sitting. And others may have to do volunteer work for future experience," McGhee said.

He provided a number of tips which may help the job hunter.

"FIRST, DON'T forget most employers require the employee have a Social Security card," he said. "If you don't have one, apply now because the processing period takes three to six weeks."

"Select employment based on education and past experiences; even if there was no salary involved. When applying for a job, focus on preparation. Know your strengths and weaknesses, get a sample application and prepare a fact sheet to include all the information requested on the form, such as references, past jobs, experience and other activities or hobbies of which learned skills may be converted into a job."

"Prepare for an interview. Learn something about the company and ex-

press an interest in the business. Go to the interview alone so you don't run the risk of feeling pressured to hurry. Be punctual or early. Dress neat, be clean and well groomed. Maintain eye-to-eye contact with the interviewer and talk clearly. In short, sell yourself."

McGhee suggests calling back if you don't hear from the employer, and if you didn't get the job, ask why so that you might learn how to improve the next try for employment.

When seeking employment, keep in mind the businesses which increase during the summer, says Chuck Altman, director of the Michigan Department of Labor's Youth Employment Clearing House, an agency established

to help youth find summer work. He said any business which was closed for the winter makes a good target, including resorts, camps, playgrounds, amusement parks, farms, nurseries, ice cream and soft drink concessions.

"KEEP YOUR eyes open. Many employers still use their front windows to advertise for jobs. Scour the classified section in the newspapers and local shopping guides. Watch bulletin boards at supermarkets," said Altman.

He noted that the clearing house has prepared four job-hunting brochures, including a question-and-answer pamphlet about working.

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