

THE SOUTHERN ILLINOISAN WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2007

JOB FAIR: *Man-Tra-Con offers advice to job hunters*

FROM PAGE 1B

"We're looking for diesel mechanics, electricians, certified welders and painters. We've had 50 or 60 people give us resumes today. I was absolutely amazed and pleasantly surprised at how good the pool of applicants is," he said.

Bruce Rowley, 57, of Sesser was laid off from his longtime job recently and included the fair in his job search efforts.

"At this point, I'm looking for anything that pays," Rowley said. "I've got a good work history with experience in assembly lines, boat trailer companies and small engine repair, but it seems like there

is nothing out there for me. People are looking for workers, but they aren't looking at the older generation. I'm waiting for the good Lord to open up something for me."

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Job fair helps former Maytag employees

Man-Tra-Con offers advice for job hunters

BY BECKY MALKOVICH
THE SOUTHERN

MARION — Walking through the front door of the One-Stop Business and Employment Center Tuesday to attend a job fair was a scary experience for Karen Whitehead.

But then for Whitehead, every day since she lost her job at the Herrin Maytag plant has been scary.

"Coming in here today is scary. Trying to find a new job at my age is scary, but the thought of going back to school at my age is also scary. I'm scared of just about everything these days," laughed Whitehead, 51, who worked at the plant for 28 years.

She said she attended the "Smart Choices for Today and Tomorrow" employment fair to see what kinds of opportunities "are out there. But I'm also looking for a job related to seniors and health care, maybe in a nursing home. I wanted to meet some of the employers and see what kind of qualifications they want or what kind of schooling I would need."

Kathy Lively, executive director of Man-Tra-Con Corp., which hosted the fair at its Marion office, said Whitehead's strategy for job hunting was smart.

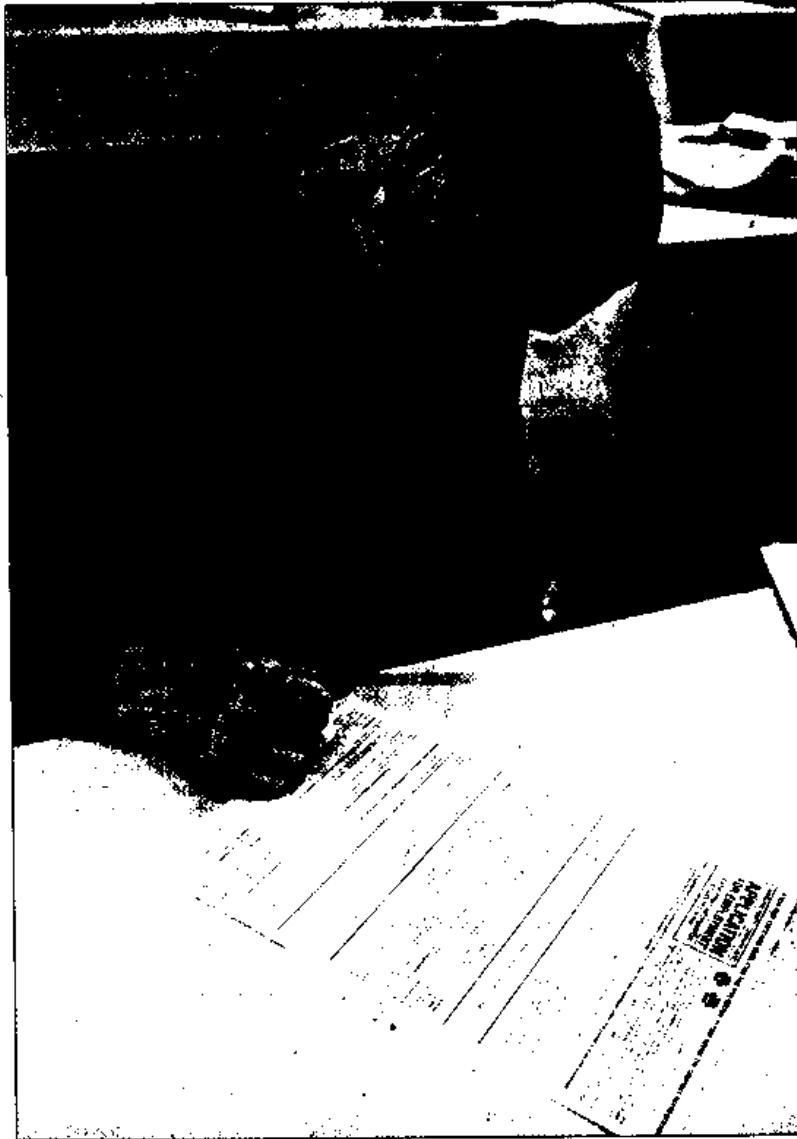
The job fair was held, she said, to create "awareness of what opportunities are out there and a knowledge of what the job seeker needs to do to take advantage of the opportunities. Some people may come here and land a job today. Others may look at what's available and realize they need to go back to school for additional training.

"Still others may decide to relocate — we hope temporarily — if they find they can't get the kind of salary and benefits they want," Lively added.

The job fair was aimed at dislocated workers such as those formerly employed by Maytag, but anyone searching for a job was welcome, said Kristen Poshard, transition services coordinator for Man-Tra-Con.

Still, Poshard was impressed by the turnout of more than 1,000 people.

"The buzz was people would be lined up when I



PAMELA KAY SCHMALLENBERGER / THE SOUTHERN

Patrick Townzen, 25, of Herrin fills out an application at the Man-Tra-Con job fair Tuesday. Bill Connor (below right) of Murphysboro gives a resume to Jennifer Neville, the corporate human resources assistant for National Railway Equipment Co.

got to work, but at 7 a.m., no one was here. By 8 though, at least 100 people were here and by the time we opened at 9, the place was jam-packed. It's great to see Southern Illinoisans come out to compete in the job market," she said.

Poshard said 65 businesses set up at the fair, collecting resumes and conducting interviews.

Gary B. Crouse of National Railway Equipment Co. in Mount Vernon was among those searching for employees. He said his company is in immediate need of 30 to 40 new employees.

