

# THE GARDNER NEWS

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## Heywood Library in Gardner hosts annual job fair

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GARDNER — A steady stream of applicants filed through the Greenwood Meeting Room at Levi Heywood Memorial Library as the MassHire North Central Career Center held its annual Winter Job Fair.

Several local companies had hiring managers manning booths at the event, while a table was set aside for prospective employees to fill out applications before sitting down for an informal interview.

“It’s a great opportunity to meet folks from the local community and educate them more on what some of our job opportunities are,” said Kathleen Lamoureaux, a division director with the Arc of Opportunity in Fitchburg. She said her company, a human services agency, supports adults with disabilities and acquired brain injuries. “So we look to recruit staff who will support them in living a more independent life.” She said the fair had been a productive one, that she had collected resumes from several applicants interested in working with individuals with disabilities and their families.

Regional Human Resource Manager Tammy Stewart-Olson with DS Smith in Westminster said local job fairs are an effective way for employers to meet face-to-face with prospective employees.

“We take part in (job fairs) often, and it gives us an opportunity to mingle, and it’s great for networking,” said Stewart-Olson, who added that her company, which manufactures corrugated boxes, is always on the lookout for more employees. “We have first and second shifts, and we’re always looking for machine operators, forklift drivers and assemblers.” She said that after just an hour, the on Jan. 22 job fair event had already resulted in the collection of several applications from local job-seekers.

“We’ve definitely had some great prospects, and those who are looking for positions (we’ve already filled), I refer to other people I know in the industry,” Stewart-Olson said.

“We’ve only been here for about two hours and we’ve already got a lot of good applications and good resumes from people that I think are very well qualified for the positions we have open,” said Jack Tomczyk, a transit supervisor with GAAMHA in Gardner. He said his company has a wide variety of job opportunities available, including counseling positions and transportation services.

Tomczyk said he was pleased to see so many qualified applicants turn out for the local job fair.

“Most of these people are from the area, and a lot of them have a skill set that we can definitely use in our company,” he said.

Zachary McBride, who works in the human resources department at Heywood Healthcare in Gardner, said his company typically ends up hiring at least a few people as a result of job fairs across the area. He said this was the first time Heywood Healthcare participated in a job fair at the library.

“We’ve been to a couple over at the (American) Legion, we’ve hosted some internal ones, and we usually come up with a handful of hires,” McBride said, adding that he had collected several applications after a little more than an hour at the event. “This is the best (job fair) we’ve been to in a while. It’s been a great turnout.”

Heywood Healthcare Human Resources Generalist Afiya Lopez agreed, adding that she was pleased by the caliber of prospective employees at the event.

“It seems like we’ve had a higher quality of candidates (here) than at some of the other (job fairs) I’ve been to. I think this has been very successful,” Lopez said. Heywood Healthcare was looking to fill a variety of positions, including hospital cafeteria workers, housekeepers, administrators and nurses.

Eric Lombardo, a senior recruiter with Johnson Controls in Westminster, said he usually finds local job fairs a “hit or miss” affair, but the Heywood Library event had been a very productive gathering. He said his company was looking to fill jobs in its local call center.

“We’re looking for customer service (representatives) to work over the phone with our various clients all across the country,” Lombardo said. “And I’d say we’ve already gotten a good six or seven qualified candidates so far.”

Business Partner Stacy LaPlante with Recovery Centers of America (RCA) in Westminster said local job fairs are effective because they represent a targeted opportunity for job seekers to meet with prospective employers.

“It allows people to come in with a focus and talk directly to the employers that are recruiting for specific positions,” LaPlante said, adding that RCA is currently hiring RNs, LPNs, therapists, recovery support specialists and drivers. She said her company is constantly looking for new employees.

“We’re in a position where we are continually expanding to be able to offer more support and services, we’ve just recently opened our 90-bed outpatient (facility) in Westminster, so there is definitely a continual need for people who are interested in helping,” LaPlante said.