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Holiday season delivers job opportunities in retail -By Chin Lee

With the holiday season quickly approaching, many folks may be shopping for more than the usual stocking stuffers or goodies under the tree.

For those shopping for work, the holiday season can be an opportunity to earn extra money- if they are open to the kind of seasonal jobs available during the holidays.

“Mostly what we’re seeing is retail,” said Patti Clary, Business and Workforce Specialist for Sutter County’s OneStop Business Center. “Both (Yuba and Sutter counties’) OneStops are accepting applications on behalf of employers.”

Businesses accepting applications included Toys R Us, The Dollar Tree, Sam’s Club and target, Clary said, “but I know many of the retail stores are accepting.” Workers are typically needed to be cashiers or stock clerks, she said, although specialty jobs are also available. Toys R Us is looking for someone to dress as Santa Claus, she said.

What she’s not seeing are the job postings from Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which usually hires seasonal workers during the holidays. She believes with the new Wal-Mart having debuted in Linda recently, all workers may have been hired when the store debuted.

According to Todd Hildon, manager for the Wal-Mart store in Linda, he has already hired the 20 additional workers needed for the season. He said there is no need to post any new jobs because he usually gets about 20 to 30 applications a day at the store, in addition to the applications already on file.

Margaret Fernandez, branch manager for Archer Personnel and Staffing in Yuba City, believes job opportunities may pick up toward the end of November, when temporary workers are needed to fill in for vacationing employees.

“Things are much better this year than last year,” Fernandez said. “That’s the reason why our business picks up around the holidays.”

Most of the jobs being filled by the employment agency are currently customer service related in retail and sales, said Fernandez. They range from greeters to demonstrators and even elf-helpers.

Clary believes, however, that more and more local employers today are choosing to increase productivity rather than hiring more employees in order to save money. This is a national trend that seems to be consistent with what local employers are doing, she said.

Yolanda Montes, employment program representative for the California Education Development Department, agreed.

“It’s kind of slack this year,” she said of the holiday employment outlook. “It’s not dead, but I think employers are kind of cautious this year. They’re concerned with not overspending. They’re afraid they won’t be able to sell all their stuff, so they’re not hiring like they used to.”

Although there are still some jobs out there, Montes said, most employers start hiring for the holidays in September.

“We’re getting job orders, but nothing extravagant like five years ago,” she said. “Maybe they got their help earlier this year, but you see employers laying off people, too. I think that they’re all realizing that anything you can save makes a difference.

The pay for typical holiday work is usually minimum wage, said Clary. Some of the jobs may pay a little more, but wages are usually around \$6.75 per hour, she said.

Regardless of the type of work, Clary said, to increase their chances of being hired applicants should always dress professionally for the interview. It is also important to make sure applications are complete, accurate, and legible. Having a resume- and even a small portfolio- can be really helpful, she said.

“People may not think that helps, but anything that makes you more marketable to the employer helps, Clary said.

Montes believes if someone really wants to work, they will find it.

“But it’s a matter of taking what’s available,” she said. “The doors are tight. You can’t expect to take a job if you don’t have the education or experience, but you can take a job that can offer you the training to move up to where you want to be.

By taking what’s available, even a job that may only last until the first of the year, Montes said, can mean the first step in getting inside that door permanently.