

Job fair jammed

By John Dickey/Appeal-Democrat

At least 1,000 job hunters tested the waters Wednesday at the "Sea of Opportunity" job fair - some waiting at the doors before the event opened.

"We're thrilled with the turnout," said Linda Baker, business workforce specialist with the Sutter County One Stop. "We're so glad the weather cooperated with us today."

A few hundred participants lined up outside the Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds Main Exhibit Hall to get a jump on other job seekers.

They found a job fair with close to 80 employers, schools and job search agencies, about the same number as last year's first event. The bulk of employers were in the medical sector, accounting for roughly a quarter of the companies, followed by government agencies.

New employers at this year's fair included Union Pacific; Trendwest, a resort company seeking vacation appointment setters; the state Franchise Tax Board; and the recently opened Hampton Inn. The fair was organized by local job search agencies.

Baker said she thought the economy was about the same for job seekers as a year ago, with job fair attendance also on par.

She noted some job fair attendees were laid off from retail after the post-holiday rush. There were few jobless construction workers despite slumping home sales and construction. The state Employment Development Department last month estimated that there were 700 fewer construction jobs in December 2006 than in December 2005.

"We haven't had a lot of people laid off," said Baker.

The "Sea of Opportunity" wasn't always smooth sailing for job applicants who hit choppy waters because of age or for other reasons.

"For older people, it seems to be harder," said Bob Morris, 58, of Yuba City. "There's a lot of young people out there looking for jobs."

Morris found that he still had to go to a Web site to apply for most of the jobs. But the fair did give Morris a chance to learn about job opportunities.



Jesse Drury/Appeal-Democrat
Officers Yvonne Vasquez, left, and Daniel Cea of the California Department of Corrections look for prospective recruits at the "Sea of Opportunity" job fair at the Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds on Wednesday. One thousand local job seekers attended the event.

"It's a great way to find out all those different companies without running all over Yuba City and Marysville," said Morris, who works part-time and is looking for a full-time clerical position.

Michelle Rownd, 32, of Colusa, was looking for clerical work but found it in low demand at the fair.

"I need more clerical positions," said Rownd, who is unemployed.

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