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Fields of opportunity

Demographic changes can be key to your career path

BY PAUL STEIN
Staff Writer

Employment opportunities result from the relationship between population, labor force and the demand for goods and services, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The U.S. population is expected to increase by 20 million between 2000 and 2010, with the 55-to-64 age group increasing by 1.1 million—more than any other group.

"The importance of demographics in shaping future job trends can't be underestimated," said Tony Lee, co-author of two books on careers and editor of the Wall Street Journal's CareerJournal.com, a free online service that includes a job database, salary data and thousands of career-related articles.

The aging of the baby boom generation and the fact that people are living longer is driving demand for workers in the home health care field and fields such as geriatric physical therapy. As boomers approach retirement age, shortages in fields such as teaching are emerging, according to Lee.

And, as our society becomes more science-based, the employment future for people with backgrounds in applied sciences and math is bright, according to Alana Levine, director of special projects for the College of Science at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Biotechnology, nanotechnology, bioinformatics (genomics or

data mining and DNA sequencing and analysis), applied optics (lasers and the like), genetic engineering, molecular biology, environmental science, environmental risk management and the most generation of artificial intelligence are among the hottest tech fields.

But the biggest bubble in the employment picture will come from service-producing industries such as finance, insurance, real estate, government services, transportation, communications and utilities, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The bureau projects that 20.2 million of the 22 million new wage and salaried job-gate, and during the 2000-2010 period will be in the wholesale and retail trade sector.

The BLS identifies services as the fastest-growing major industry group. It includes health services, social services—such as child day care as more women enter the work force—and business services such as computer and data processing services, which provide prepackaged and specialized software, data and computer systems design and computer-related consulting services.

Employment in the computer and data processing field is expected to grow by 66 percent between 2000 and 2010, making it the fastest-growing industry in the economy.

Demand for workers in home health care—historically a high-paying field—already has driven pay rates up by 30 to 30 percent, according to Lee.

"Many home health workers earn \$30 per hour and receive the same benefits as other corporate employees if they work for one of the many home health care supply companies," Lee said.

Market demand also has boosted salaries



Photo by Tom Scavone/TBO.com

As society becomes more science-based employment opportunities for people with backgrounds in applied sciences, such as biotechnology, will continue to increase.

for public school teachers—another historically underpaid profession.

"In Alaska, in 1998, the entry-level salary for a public school teacher was \$24,000. Today it's \$30,000," Lee reported, adding that the fact that so many educators have reached retirement age already has created a critical teacher shortage.

High-tech jobs, which have been in short supply in recent years, are expected to open up because, Lee says, "fewer students are pursuing high-tech studies because they are on jobs right now and there are fewer high-tech foreigners in the employment pool since Sept. 11, 2001 and tighter restrictions on immigration."

Lee points out that high-tech industries hold potential for "all kinds of jobs."

"Science is not done in a vacuum. Lots of

support employees are needed in high-tech industries—from project managers to attorneys and marketing specialists," she said.

High-tech industries need people with cross-disciplinary skills, according to Sheila Tobias, outreach coordinator for the Sloan Science Masters Initiative, a professional college program that was developed in response to industry needs. The program is offered at about 30 universities and is designed to turn out graduates with a high level of skill in math or science as well as that training needed to understand what it takes to bring science-based projects to market in order to meet commercially viable.

Security is another field that has exploded since Sept. 11, according to Paul Silinsky, head of Amersyber, a division of Management Recruiters International. With tighter security at airports, ports, public events, power plants and more, security is a booming business. Job opportunities in the industry include not only security guards but also engineers and scientists who create security and access control systems and the people who sell and service them.

Former FBI agents are in great demand as consultants, Silinsky observed.

Opportunities for employment in venturist services also are expected to grow, according to the BLS's Occupational Outlook Handbook. Transportation and material moving occupations should increase 15.2 percent and add 1.5 million jobs by 2010, the BLS predicts. The agency projects 662,000 new jobs for installation, maintenance and repair workers by 2010, with the fastest growth rate expected to be among telecommunications line installers and repairers.

"What's not hot in employment is goods-producing industries."

"With so many companies moving their manufacturing offshore, jobs in manufacturing are declining," Lee reported.

Tampa Bay CareerSeeker, The Tampa Tribune's Sunday Employment section, is the number No. 1 resource in the Tampa Bay area reaching more potential employees than any other local employment vehicle.

Tampa Bay CareerSeeker features more than 3,800 jobs in the Tribune weekly. A recent publication, Newspapers Deliver Hunter's Job Market, stated newspapers remain the No. 1 source for job seekers, with 77 percent of job seekers using the newspaper in the past year. In addition, 62 percent of job seekers used the Sunday newspaper employment section to find a job. And, 47 percent of job seekers said newspapers were their single source of employment information.

Source: Newspapers Deliver America's Job Market, NAA/NAA 2000 Newspaper Advertising Planbook

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