

DRILLING JOBS ATTRACT 125 JOB SEEKERS TO FILL 20 OPENINGS



SOS Staffing is interviewing job seekers for jobs servicing gas and oil wells. After a recruiting session on Tuesday, 125 applicants showed up to apply for the job. They had a starting goal to hire 20 workers, but now may be hiring many more. "I'm absolutely ecstatic. We'll try to utilize all the good candidates that we can," said Nicki LaFrance, branch manager for the Northeast region of SOS Staffing. She interviewed job applicants from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at The Employment Source in Monroe Centre in New Philadelphia. They will also conduct interview sessions from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Ramada Inn in Strasburg today. "There are a lot of good people looking for work," she said. "I'm excited. My goal is to get as many people to work as I can." A.C. Chapman, 40, an electrician from Seville in Medina County, drove down for an interview after his cousin in Amsterdam told him about the job. Chapman is working through another staffing company. "I'll do whatever they feel like, for the money they're paying," he said. Oil field operators earn approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000 in their first year, plus benefits. "I need people who have an extensive amount of outdoor work experience," said LaFrance, who covers Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York. "They're going to be out on the well site for 16 to 18 hours per day for 15 days straight. You have to be OK to work in the snow, sleet or freezing rain. And these guys are bending, lifting, twisting and turning. They have to be able to lift 80 to 100 pounds." The field operator jobs are for Schlumberger, which is one of the nation's largest oil and gas well servicing companies. The jobs require setting and taking down oil rigs. Approximately 50 people showed up for the first round of hiring after the doors opened at 9:00 a.m. Some people had been waiting in line since 8:30 that morning. At times, all 42 chairs in the waiting room were filled with job seekers. Anita Rutledge, a recruiting specialist with TES, heard several applicants state that they had been out of work for a long time. "They were saying things like: 'At this point, I'm getting desperate, I'll do anything. I need a job.'" Many applications would not talk to the Times Reporter because they had a job elsewhere and did not want to take a chance in losing their job. Other people spoke to the reporter, but kept a constant watch on the door just in case they were called in for an interview. William Crown, 44, of Carrollton, said, "I've been driving steel for 20 years and the company shut down and I've been looking for work," before he was called in. Arthur Zurcher, 25, of New Philadelphia, stated that he is unemployed and currently attending college. LaFrance said she was "very, very impressed with the turnout. I did not expect this many people. I've been to job fairs and had three people show up, so this is excellent." She also stated the most frequently asked question by the job seekers was, "Am I going to make good money?" She said the benefits package is among "the top 10 percent nationwide, with very competitive wages. This is a great opportunity."

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