

JOB FAIR IN WEST VIRGINIA DRAWS HUNDREDS



Close to 1,200 people searching for employment showed up on Wednesday for the Independent Oil and Gas Association of West Virginia job fair in Moundsville. There were representatives for 40 production and service companies to speak with potential employees about how the industry wants to hire local workers. "We want to hire people from West Virginia. But what people need to understand is that if your company is drilling wells in a different state, you have to go there to work," R. Dennis Xander, vice president of the association, said. "Just because you see vehicles with out-of-state tags doesn't mean anything. The vehicles may just be registered in that state." Companies such as Chesapeake Energy and Consol Energy told potential employees at the fair that there would be some local accounting positions with their companies, which was a breath of fresh air for unemployed accountants in attendance who do not have experience in any other fields of the oil and gas industries. Moundsville resident Roger Metz said that he is looking for full-time employment. "I have a lot of experience working with concrete," Metz said. Randy Mick is employed by Walmart right now but he was in attendance in an effort to acquire a job that puts his welding skills to work in the oil and gas industries. Blake Pottmeyer came from Parkersburg to apply for jobs with various gas companies in attendance "They were pretty helpful," Pottmeyer said. "Hopefully, I'll get a call." One of the best methods to increase the amount of jobs in the industry is to keep natural gas demand closely lined with supply instead of supplying the market with the product. "I have wells that produce, in 30 days, what it used to take a well 25 or 30 years to produce," he said. Right now, natural gas supply is pretty high, but there is a low demand for it. The price per 1,000-cubic-foot unit is around \$3.35, which is much lower than the \$14 each unit cost back in 2008, but Xander feels the price will increase soon. "As some coal-fired electric plants are replaced with natural gas-fired electric plants - and as more cars begin to run on natural gas - we will see demand go up," he said. Xander told attendees of the job fair that the industry is not trying to rip-off the public by using employees from out of state. "I would rather have a root canal than drill a gas well on land owned by a surface owner who does not own their minerals," Xander added. The job fair was a success for both the companies and those in attendance looking for jobs as potential employees were able to make contacts within the industries in an effort to acquire jobs in the near future.

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