

OIL BOOMTOWN INFLUX OPENS JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN NON-OIL COUNTIES



The oil boom has seen hundreds of job aspirants rushing to North Dakota, to take advantage of the good fortune that the boom has brought in its wake. However, employers are saying that the job seekers will be well-advised to head east as well, instead of all flocking to the western part of the state. The oil companies are hiring, but the huge number of people that it has attracted, has positively impacted other industries as well. Statistics compiled and revealed by Job Service North Dakota show that a total of 24,059 job openings were posted online in April. This was 16 percent higher than the preceding month and 66 percent higher, than the percentage recorded a year ago. The point to note was that a majority of the job openings, nearly 66 percent, were in counties that do not produce oil. Myopic focus on job openings in the oil boomtowns, have made the people lose sight of job openings, other than in the oil fields. Commenting on the job openings available in non-oil producing counties, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple said, "That's a very, very lost fact." The April job posting listed 5,569 openings in Cass County and 2,204 jobs in Williams County. Carey Fry, spokeswoman, for the Job Service North Dakota office in Fargo, the largest city of Cass County said, "The economy in the eastern half of the state is really very healthy. So it's not like all the jobs are in the western part of the state at all." North Dakota has the distinction of having the lowest unemployment rate in the US, at 3 percent. Places where the oil industries are concentrated; actually sees supply exceeding demand, with more jobs than job applicants. The ration of job applicants to job vacancies in William County is 10 jobs for every unemployed person. Streets are lined with posters, asking for workers. An energy conference in Bismarck this week is expected to attract more than 4000 people, include the likes of LaRussa, a friend of billionaire oil baron Harold Hamm. The conference is to discuss an industry that is projected to add 65,000 new jobs by 2020. Whilst that number is huge, given the current job figures across the country, Carey Fry says that she does not believe it will dramatically impact the labor pool in eastern North Dakota. "There may be some workers moving to the oilfields, but for the most part the jobs being filled in the oilfield aren't the same jobs being filled in the east," she said. Professions offering the utmost opportunity in the Fargo region in April were office and administrative support (610), production (558), and sales (554). The most opportune employment areas in the Williston region were construction (391) and transportation (375). Quite a few of the jobs available in and around Fargo required specialized expertise and advanced education. There were 637 openings for business, finance, computers, math, architecture and engineering fields, as compared with 117 for those occupations in the Williston region. Those jobs are inclined to be more permanent and constant, Governor Dalrymple said, adding, "Some developers talk about job permanence, the ones that are most likely to last for an extended period of time. A lot of those folks would say they like what they see in the (Fargo) region." A company BreadVault, recently established in Fargo, by Ross Almlie, makes online money management tools designed for families with children. Almlie, the company's founder, says that he hopes to have 20 full-time employees within 3 years, which is proof of the potency of the area's economy. BreadVault was a finalist in a state completion that gave cash prizes for the best new business ideas. "To me, that's the exciting part, to see these companies pop up that people have been waiting to see for the last 10 years. Now that the opportunity is here, there's no longer that argument that we don't have the highly-skilled jobs to attract and keep people." Small startup tech companies are the best job creators, Dalrymple said. "Once they set out to commercialize a breakthrough product, the pace at which they create jobs is faster than anything else and the potential for higher paying jobs is much better than anything else," the governor said.