

Job seekers flock to fair to snag one of Paducah's 'hottest jobs'

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Liatisher Donaldson pulled her resume from a folder as she waited to talk to a human resources manager.

"I've been here since 9 this morning," she said at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Donaldson, 28, of Paducah earned her degree in business management from Mid-Continent University in May but has had trouble finding a well-paying job since then. She thought a trip to the Need a Job Fair could help.

"Coming here you can actually meet the people in person instead of just mailing in a resume," she said.

The job fair was a result of the \$1 million McCracken County Community Career Endowment the late Fred Paxton and his wife, Peggy, founded in January 2006 to help minorities and others find local jobs. Fred Paxton was the retired publisher of The Paducah Sun.

About 125 people attended the fair at Paducah Middle School, said Linda Dungey, the endowment's interim executive director.

"We've got quite a few people who want jobs, but they don't have the skills needed," she said.

The endowment has worked with employers to provide paid on-the-job training or offer courses so that they can learn the skills they need, she said. Others are offering entry-level jobs while

promising assistance to achieve higher-paid positions as they advance within the company.

“It’s just a matter of how do you get the community together,” Dungey said of planning the fair. “How do you get these folks to understand that these jobs are attainable?”

Part of the answer was a series of fair workshops on what Dungey called “the hottest jobs in Paducah.”

“These are the jobs people tell me they have the most difficulty getting qualified candidates to apply for,” she said.

They included carpentry, commercial truck driving, nursing, office technologies, phlebotomy and welding.

Job counselors also provided individual career assessments and tips for interviewing.

“I think it was very informational for anyone who wanted to better themselves and further their opportunities,” said Jason Houston, 27, of Paducah, one of the job seekers.

Martha Argotte, a human resources generalist at Lourdes hospital, said she spent much of her time answering questions Saturday, but thought that was a good thing.

“We’re getting a lot of the questions about the kinds of things the community needs to be aware of,” she said.

They ranged from questions about how to apply for a job online to what certifications are required from different jobs in the healthcare industry.

Argotte also took time to review resumes and offer suggestions for improvement.

“Being the first time the community is doing an event like this, you never know what the outcome is going to be,” she said. “It’s nice to see interest.”