

Survey: Hourly Jobs Now Popular Among Young People

A recent online survey by SnagAJob.com, a web site that matches job seekers with employment opportunities, reveals that just as many young workers (18-29 years old) prefer hourly positions as salaried work. Of the 1,755 respondents, 40% explain they see themselves as a career hourly worker, compared to 41% who anticipate a career in a traditional salaried position.

Among those without a college degree, 48% expect to be hourly, while 30% anticipate a salaried income. Even 25% of those with degrees still expect hourly incomes.

"This data shows that young Americans are indeed focused on hourly jobs for their career, a path that compares equally to salaried work in offering rewarding and long-term

work," SnagAJob.com CEO Shawn Boyer says in a press release announcing the findings. "America's hourly workforce is extremely diversified – from retail managers and mechanics to nurses and call-center operators – and it's refreshing to see that the generation that will propel our country's growth in the coming years truly desires these opportunities."

SnagAJob.com contends this survey identifies a class of employees called "new collar workers," which is comprised of roughly 20 million young Americans who expect to hold hourly positions for the duration of their careers, working in retail, customer service, health care, offices and restaurants.

Resource: www.snagajob.com

Indiana Company Helping Alabama Get Wired

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley is striving to bring broadband Internet access into the homes of all Alabamians – regardless of how rural their area – with a program called the Alabama Broadband Initiative. Assisting Riley in this endeavor is The Enterprise Group, a Noblesville-based consulting company, that's serving a managerial role to help the groups involved collaborate.

The Enterprise Group owner Jim Hines explains the full purpose of the initiative is to expand the use and deployment of broadband across the state.

"The southern states seem to face a wider digital divide than others," he contends. "Citizens' access is limited in rural areas, and this project addresses both the supply and demand sides."

The Enterprise Group is working closely with Ohio-based CostQuest, a programming company that signed a two-year, \$1.7 million contract with the state of Alabama to provide service maps that will illustrate what areas are served and underserved. Hines notes that teams from the West Coast and Washington, D.C., are also involved.

"CostQuest is doing the mapping, and negotiating non-disclosure agreements and getting data," Hines explains, "and they're building maps that will be online and interactive."

According to Hines, the project will help connect more than just individuals in the state.

"This will definitely impact the consumer and business sectors, as well as government, health care and education sectors," he offers, adding that online education and e-government functions are key impetuses for the project. "For those who live near Indianapolis, it's hard to imagine a culture without (high-speed Internet), but it's happening in these rural areas and (Riley's) dream is that we can't leave them behind."

Hines estimates that after maps are unveiled, action teams will begin organizing in May or June to determine deployment strategies for each area. He believes funding will then be sought in 2010 and implementation will follow.

Resource: Jim Hines, The Enterprise Group, at www.tegonline.com



Boeing Ranks American Engineering Schools

Boeing, the Chicago-based aerospace company, has compiled a new ranking of America's best engineering schools. The criteria: the performance of Boeing's own employees. The company surveyed performance records of its 35,000 engineers in an effort to determine differences in quality that could be attributed to the employees' alma maters.

The ranking system was designed to improve the dialogue on curriculum, performance and Boeing's ability to build strong relationships with universities, the company's Richard D. Stephens, senior vice president for human resources and administration, told the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Furthermore, the rankings were a pivotal step in using the private sector as a means to keep colleges accountable. The company sent 150 letters to deans across the country notifying them of their status and offered advice on how to improve. The results were released privately to the schools.

Critics of the ranking system contend a similar analysis by *U.S. News & World Report* causes some colleges to make superficial changes simply to increase their standing – not necessarily to benefit their students.

Shorts written by Matt L. Ottinger

Several Factors Contribute to Rail Boost

Rail is becoming a more popular way for companies to transport freight, a report in the January 2009 edition of *IndustryWeek* notes. When asked if that was accurate, Tom Hoback, president and CEO of The Indiana Rail Road Company, responds in the affirmative, surmising that “for many reasons, the future looks bright for rail.”

According to Hoback, there are several explanations.

“For one, roads are becoming more congested, particularly in metropolitan areas like Chicago, and it slows delivery time ... 45% of all inner city freight is moved by rail, and that market share continues to increase,” he explains.

He adds that a cultural paradigm shift could pave the way – or grease the tracks – for more rail usage.

“Companies now are having a harder time finding drivers,” Hoback contends. “This new generation of people doesn’t like to be away from home for long periods of time.”

Energy usage is also playing a key role in a world that is

looking for alternatives to oil – and pursuing greener practices.

“Rail is much more fuel efficient than trucks,” he says. “On one gallon of diesel fuel, you can move a ton of freight 450 miles on rail.”

Hoback notes that some shipping companies are even loading their trucks onto rail cars to move them across the country in an effort to save fuel costs, and adds that United Parcel Service is one of the country’s largest rail users.

“In the last several years, some railroads have added precise scheduling, which makes it more attractive, especially to those with time-sensitive freight,” he offers.

He adds that there has been a bit of a downturn recently due to the fact that many struggling automotive companies are major rail users. But on the whole, he sees its cost-effective nature and the environmental movement to be boons to railroads.

Resource: Tom Hoback, The Indiana Rail Road Company, at www.inrd.com

New Intermodal Connection Puts Indiana on Freight Map

The Hoosier state and Los Angeles became linked late last year when a new intermodal freight connection began running between the West Coast and Avon. The venture was the product of a collaboration between the Union Pacific and CSX railroads, and allows freight being shipped from Los Angeles/Long Beach to be sent directly to a distribution center in Avon (after cargo is transferred between trains in St. Louis).

“This was a big success,” says Will Friedman of Duke Realty, a company that supported the project because it would benefit Indiana businesses and its clients. “It’s important for importers and exporters to give them more affordable service and higher quality. This helps eliminate trips from Chicago yards, and makes Indianapolis a direct inland point for transportation.”

Friedman adds that tens of thousands of containers are transported from Chicago to Indianapolis annually. He likens this to being as inconvenient as living in Indiana and having to fly out of Chicago’s airports for every trip.

A coalition of Indiana counties, economic development groups and private entities all worked in support of the connection, according to Friedman. He notes that Hendricks County now has one of the largest distribution centers in the country, totaling around 30 million square feet.

On the whole, Indiana is “playing catch-up” in terms of volume with other Midwestern hubs as the Indianapolis area currently ranks behind cities like Chicago, Louisville and Memphis, Friedman explains. He estimates that Avon may be able to substantially increase its current capacity from 30,000 lifts annually to potentially 200,000 in the future.

Resource: Will Friedman, Duke Realty, at www.dukerealty.com

SouthShore Freight Serving the North

Stretching from Chicago to South Bend, the SouthShore Freight line is quite active, shipping an average of 60,000 car loads a year to its many customers. SouthShore’s web site explains that the line handles thousands of loads for some customers and only a few for others, noting the diversity of its customer base: “Big or small, we take ‘em all.”

Unifrax, a New Carlisle-based high temperature insulation provider, uses the line to ship its raw materials, which include silica, alumina and kaolin. In the past, Unifrax has received 20 to 25 cars per month.

“The biggest advantage for us is that (SouthShore) allows us to bring in such large quantities; rail is much more efficient for that,” explains Todd Thomas, purchasing manager for Unifrax.

Additionally, Thomas appreciates the ability to track his shipments online once they leave the provider and labels the line’s customer service as “excellent.”

Mike Burke, plant manager at

Criterion Catalysts & Technologies (the world’s largest supplier of hydroprocessing catalysts), also uses SouthShore to ship alumina powder.

“SouthShore was better able to meet our needs and it helped us establish a better relationship with a local firm,” Burke says.

Resources: Mike Burke, Criterion Catalysts & Technologies, at www.criterioncatalysts.com
Todd Thomas, Unifrax, at www.unifrax.com

