

PRESS RELEASE

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STATE LABOR DEPARTMENT URGES EMPLOYERS TO GIVE TEENS A CHANCE

Governor's Summer Job Hunt Program faces challenges in its thirty-first year of operation

(CITY) – As the thirty-first season of the Governor's Summer Job Hunt Program moves forward, job counselors who assist teens at the Workforce Centers of Eagle, Garfield, Lake, Pitkin and Summit Counties report that the summer of 2011 is shaping up to be a tough one – perhaps one of the toughest yet -- for high school and college students looking for work experience. Approximately 10,700 young people are currently registered and looking for a summer job with the Workforce Centers across the Denver Metro area. Connecting those young people with job opportunities this year has been a challenge for Workforce Center staff.

Youth-friendly employers are the strength of the Governor's Summer Job Hunt program.

Without them, there are no summer jobs, no exposure to the world of work, no access to career track employment opportunities. The best of these participating local business people aren't merely providing summer employment, they are help teens succeed, helping students take that first transitional step from school to career.

Last year, when the average annual unemployment rate for Colorado adults stood at 8.7 percent, the unemployment rate for 16 to 19 year olds was 25.3 percent. To put some perspective on it, five years ago, the annual average unemployment rate for adults was 4.2 percent. But even in that strong economy, teens between the ages of 16 and 19 still had a much higher unemployment rate (15.9 percent).

The fact is, in good times and bad, high school and college students are always at a disadvantage because they are less experienced, less confident and are usually looking to work for a limited number of weeks. Just as they were last summer, these usual disadvantages are compounded by the economic downturn.

When employers can offer teens a place to earn and learn, they are investing in the workforce of the future and impacting those teens more than they could have realized. The Council of Economic Advisors wrote in a 2010 report that deep downturns in the economy have a particularly adverse effect on young Americans. "Teens who first enter the labor market during a recession can have trouble getting their feet onto the first rung of the career ladder, leaving them a step or more behind throughout their lives," the report says.

"There's no question that the outlook for work has improved over last summer," says Department of Labor and Employment Executive Director Ellen Golombek, "but things haven't improved to the point that there won't still be challenges ahead." She notes that the Governor's Summer Job Hunt is important in tough economic times "because it helps teens learn of job opportunities and understand how to market themselves to employers."

Teens can learn more about the program by visiting the Department of Labor and Employment's website at <http://www.colorado.gov/cdle/youth>. Employers who can give young people an opportunity to learn, to put skills to use and see firsthand how a business operates, should contact their nearest Workforce Center in the Denver Metro region:

Denver Youth Services

1391 N Speer Blvd, #520, 720-865-5700

The Tri-County Region

Jefferson County: Jeffco YouthWorks, Laramie Building, 3500 Illinois St. (303-271-4613)

Clear Creek County: 1531 Colorado Blvd., Idaho Springs, 303-567-3135

Gilpin County: 2960 Dory Hill Rd, #100, Black Hawk, 303-582-6003

Adams County

4430 South Adams County Parkway, 1st Floor, Suite W5000, 720-523-6900

Arapahoe/Douglas Counties

Greenwood Village: CoBank Center, 5500 S. Québec Street, Suite 175, 303.636.1260

Castle Rock: 4400 Castleton Court, #197, 303 688-4825 x5037

Broomfield

6650 W 120th Ave, #A1, 303-464-5855

“Employer participation is critical,” stresses Ellen Golombek. “The Governor’s Summer Job Hunt is depending on every community-minded employer to find just one job for a teen. Whenever a young person is encouraged, enlightened or empowered, each of us everywhere is enriched.”

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