

SLATE Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (SLATE)



Francis G. Slay, Mayor



March 2014 Issue

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SLATE Update is a monthly newsletter produced by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE), part of the City of St. Louis and funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). SLATE helps match area job seekers with businesses through a variety of no-cost services.

The purpose of this publication is to share the progress and outcomes of our many programs, and will be of special interest to legislators, Workforce Investment Board members, vendors, partners, educational institutions, other public agencies or anyone with an interest in workforce development.

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BALLPARK VILLAGE WRAPS UP HIRING FOR THEIR RESTAURANTS

On Friday, March 7, Ballpark Village conducted its final recruitment event at SLATE, hiring the final 200 “front-end” personnel to service Ballpark’s restaurants, including *Cardinals Nation* and *Fox Live!* Other new Ballpark restaurants include the *Budweiser Brew House*, *PBR St. Louis*, *Howl at the Moon* and *Drunken Fish*.

Over the course of six months, SLATE has been an integral part of the hiring process developed specifically for Ballpark Village’s first phase. The process was described by SLATE’s subject matter experts, **Marla Roach**, Employment Specialist for Ballpark Village, and **Stacey Fowler**, Special Projects Manager.



Photos: (Top) Marla Roach. (Above) A PBR St. Louis hiring representative interviews a candidate at SLATE, March 7, 2014.

“St. Louis City has a very large population of hotels and service-type opportunities, so we already have lots of individuals who have those skill sets.” ~STACEY FOWLER.



Cardinals Nation interior rendering.

Marla Roach was stationed at a Hiring Center – a trailer located at the Ballpark construction site along with representatives of Ballpark’s tenants. Interested candidates were selected by SLATE through one of their Open-Call sessions and were guaranteed an interview. Once qualified candidates were identified, pre-screened and interviewed, it was Roach who entered them into SLATE’s database. Those candidates who entered the process via SLATE were able to take advantage of our Customer Service classes,

designed to prepare future hires for customer service situations and issues.

Roach described two distinct hiring processes, the “front” and “back”

ends of the “house”, with great importance placed on back-end personnel who are “all about hands-on and making sure that the food is great.” Those personnel include cooks, bussers and dishwashers.

“You have to definitely have skills in cooking. They needed to know what type of cook you are, a fry cook, a sauté cook, a pantry cook. So the chefs themselves wanted to interview individuals to make sure they know about meat preparation, separation of food, first and last inventory in and out of the kitchen, and how to handle those kitchen situations.” Roach

said that each of six restaurants needed at least 50 chefs each to cook through various shifts.

Greeters, servers, hostesses and hosts are the front-end personnel, along with parking attendants and security positions. “The front of

the house is more personality-based, being able to carry a smile and [great] customer service and hospitality,” said Roach.

“They all are going to start as part-time positions for both front-house and back-house. Everybody is 29 hours [a week] to start. As they go along...[some people] can move to full-time positions,” said Roach. The wages start at \$8 per hour for bussers, and up to \$13-\$14 depending on experience and duties for other positions.

Hiring for Ballpark restaurants will most likely continue through mid April or May. After their Orientation on Sunday, March 9, new hires were required to attend mandatory training beginning Monday, which will continue every day for the next two weeks. Roach said that if people don’t show for training, they will void their position, and she will be back hiring additional jobseekers. “That’s a deal breaker, if you don’t show for your Orientation, you missed the job.”

Stacey Fowler is confident that SLATE has the capacity to deliver so many candidates. “St. Louis City has a very large population of hotels and service-type opportunities, so we already have lots of individuals who have those skill sets,” she said. Fowler believes that SLATE has come up with a great process that works both for job seekers and businesses. Those candidates who approached Ballpark op-

MARCH CALENDAR

- **March 20, 10 - 12 p.m.:**

Floor Layers Local Union No. 1310 Info Session. Company Representatives will talk about their apprenticeship training program.



portunities through SLATE had a successful hiring rate, between 60 and 65 percent, stated Roach.

Besides hospitality and restaurants, other opportunities exist at SLATE for those looking for a part-time job, either to supplement existing income or simply to weather a period of unemployment. "People have to live and have to pay their bills. People have to survive. People may have to work two part-time jobs until they find a full-time job that will give them what they need," Fowler said. "So it gets the job done."

Fowler is referring to SLATE's newly formed Special Projects Department, which develops partnerships that help to provide job seekers both with full-time and part-time positions. She hopes that local businesses will step forward to match candidates for a full range of positions, be it part-time servers, full-time executive staff, or managers and supervisors. Fowler and her team put a lot of effort into developing a streamlined, new, hiring process for Ballpark, but recognize the process might be different for upcoming development phases at Ballpark Village, both residential and retail.

The Ballpark restaurants officially open on March 27, one week prior to the Cardinals' home opening.

MORE SHOW-ME HEROES SUPPORTERS RECOGNIZED

On March 6, 2014, representatives of 10 local companies assembled at St. Louis City Hall to receive the *Show Me-Heroes* Flag of Freedom Award. Administered by the state of Missouri Division of Workforce



Development, the *Show-Me Heroes* program has connected more than **6,000** Missouri veterans to civilian job opportunities; SLATE has helped hundreds of veteran jobseekers in the St. Louis area.

The following employers were recognized for their willingness to hire and train returning veterans: *Associated General Contractors (AGC) of St. Louis, Drury Inn, Fields Foods, Love's Travel Shops & Country Stores, Missouri Department of Transportation, Spectrum Healthcare Resources, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Patrick Center, Veterans Business Resources Center and Weir Minerals Lewis Pumps.*

Mayor **Francis G. Slay**, SLATE Executive Director **Michael K. Holmes**, and *Show-Me Heroes* Program Director **Lt. Jonathon Barry** presented each representative with both a framed Flag of Freedom Award and a personalized proclamation recognizing the occasion as "*Show-Me Heroes* Supporters Recognition of Excellence Day."

Photo (from left): Michael K. Holmes, SLATE Executive Director, Martin Payne, SLATE Veterans Representative, Lt. Jonathon Barry, Director of Show-Me Heroes, Nelson Bay, Drury Inn General Manager, Mayor Slay, City Hall, March 6, 2014.



On a related note, Mayor Slay announced that an upcoming ballot issue will help amend City of St. Louis hiring practices: "Currently, our archaic charter does not allow preferential treatment in hiring veterans. This amendment will help change that, and I expect it to pass with flying colors this November."

SHARED WORK KEEPS WORKERS ON THE JOB

The Missouri Division of Employment Security (DES) offers a service to employers and employees that many may not know about: the *Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program*.

Shared Work is an alternative to layoffs for employers that face a reduction in available work.



Instead of a layoff, it gives the employer the opportunity to divide the available work among a specified group of affected employees.

These employees receive a portion of their unemployment benefits, proportional to the percentage cut from their work hours (e.g. someone eligible for \$320 in UI benefits whose work week is cut by 20 percent would receive $\$320 \times 20\% = \64 weekly).

This allows employers to cut costs and retain their skilled workforce, while assisting employees affected by lack of work. To participate, an employer must submit a completed application plan to DES for approval, which must meet a number of criteria including:

- There is an “affected unit” of three or more employees.
- The normal 40-hour work week and corresponding wages for a participating employee are reduced in the plan by no fewer than 20 percent and no more than 40 percent.
- The plan applies to at least 10 percent of the employees in the affected unit.
- The plan describes the manner in which the participating employer treats the fringe benefits of each employee in the affected unit.

For more information, email **Bonnie Forker**, SLATE Business Development Manager, at bforker@stlworks.com, or go online at http://www.labor.mo.gov/DES/Employers/shared_work.asp.

RESTAURATEUR TO ROOFER: A SUCCESS STORY

Over two years ago, SLATE reported on the first known female roofer in our area; we are now seeing further evidence of increasing diversity in this trade.

Deborah Chunn originally talked with **Armand Paulet**, SLATE’s Building Trades Liaison, about career opportunities in this field a few years ago. As someone who had tried her hand at owning and operating her own restaurant, Deborah had some experience performing building maintenance, had found that she enjoyed it, and wanted to transfer and develop her skills.

Armand connected Chunn with the pre-apprenticeship program through *St. Louis Union Roofing Local No. 2*, where union representatives met with and enrolled her. They were immediately impressed by her eagerness and determination. “She was not afraid of getting

up there,” says Paulet. “Plus, she was very conscientious in attending all her classes.” **Dan Knight**, with the Industry Advancement Fund of Local No. 2, is like all union officers a former roofer himself. He has been able to give Deborah practical inside knowledge on everything from safety to new green technologies and materials.

“Roofing has one of the highest hourly rates of all the building trades,” Paulet continues. “Anyone, man or woman, who can handle the heights and [sometimes] intense heat can make a very good living at it.”

Like all roofer apprentices, Deborah needs to complete 4,500 hours of combined on the job and classroom work to attain journeyman status. She has been employed by *K Meier Roof Systems, Inc.* for the past several months, and is well on her way to attaining this goal, perhaps as early as the end of 2014.



Photo: Apprenticeship Committee (left to right): Apprenticeship Coordinator, Dan Knight, Deborah Chunn, holding her 80 percent advancement card, Business Manager/President of Apprenticeship Committee, Dan O’Donnell, and Financial Secretary-Treasurer and Business Agent, Dennis Marshall.