

# The Telegraph

Tuesday, August 8, 2006

## Grant aids outreach for spouses

### Counties helping military families find work in area

By Maggie Carlson / *The Telegraph*

Madison and St. Clair counties are helping find employment for spouses of military and civilian workers who might move to Scott Air Force Base following base closures on the East Coast.

A \$135,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor is helping the counties reach out and familiarize the families with the counties and their housing and job opportunities.

"It's a grant to help the spouses find work," said David Stoecklin, executive director of Madison County Employment and Training Department.

Last week, representatives from both counties traveled to Virginia to meet with spouses and families to tell them about the area and answer questions, Stoecklin told the Madison County Board Grants Committee Monday.

Grant money will also be used for a virtual interview program, where employers and job seekers in Virginia can meet and interview virtually, Stoecklin said.

At least 800 jobs are being added to Scott Air Force Base during the next three years after it was announced last year that 33 large military bases and 150 smaller facilities in the country would be closed to save money and to better suit defense needs.

The plan calls for a massive shift of U.S. forces that would result in a net loss of 29,005 military and civilian jobs at domestic installations and a saving of \$38.8 billion.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission proposed these closures after studying what affect the closures would have.

Being added at Scott Air Force base are 12 new KC-135R aircraft and the Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command and Logistics Support Center, which will draw on five major command regional supply squads that are being realigned.

The 800 jobs are through the Department of Defense and through companies contracted by the department.

Stoecklin said some of the military and civilian employees will have to make their decision to relocate as soon as within the next month. Local residents would fill the jobs left open by those who choose not to relocate.

"That's what we hope for," Stoecklin said.

Scott base officials were not available Monday to talk about the progress on relocations.

# *Highland News Leader*

**Monday, August 14, 2006**

## **Tip of the hat**

On behalf of the city of Highland and as a member of Highland's Economic Development Commission, I would like to thank the following for making our first attempt at a Job Fair a rousing success.

Thank you to Dave Stoecklin, Matt Jones and Connie Vick from the office of Madison County Employment and Training. We could not have done this without your knowledge and guidance. Thanks to John Herzog from Madison County Community Development. Herzog has been a long-time booster of Highland, and we appreciate him for it.

Thanks to the Highland City Council for their support of this project.

Thank you to the administration of Highland Community Unit School District #5 and the faculty and staff of the Highland Middle School for providing an outstanding venue for this event.

Very special thanks to Lana Hediger at City Hall, who did much of the legwork behind the scenes for the city and the DEC. Lana, you are indispensable.

And finally, thanks to the businesses that participated. Instead of sitting back and complaining about finding employees, you stepped up to work with the city and the county to fill your jobs and bring more people to our community.

It is my hope that the success of this Job Fair will lead to more cooperative efforts between the city, the county and the businesses in Highland. We are all in this together, and we will accomplish more if we continue to work as one.

**Rob Bowman**

Highland Economic Development Commission member

# Highland News Leader

Thursday, August 10, 2006

## Job fair proves highly successful

By Curt Libbra

Organizers and participants in a job fair held last week to help Highland's manufacturers said the event was even more successful than they hoped.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the turnout and the quality of candidates," said Judy Hoffmann, employment supervisor at Cooper B-Line in Highland, one of 10 companies to participate in the job fair. "We have set up between 65 and 70 interviews for positions open on the shop floor. We were also able to locate two manufacturing engineers and two product engineers."

*"It worked out very well, and I wouldn't doubt we would do it again."*

**Rob Bowman**  
Highland EDC  
member

More than 625 people attended the job fair, which was sponsored by Madison County and the city of Highland.

"From the business people I've talked to, they were even surprised by the amount of people. We

were expecting maybe only 400 to 500 people. So this was a win-win situation for the businesses and the county," said Madison County Board Chairman Alan Dunstan.

The job fair was organized at the request of Highland's manufacturers, who had said they were having a difficult time finding people to fill approximately 100 newly opened positions. The fair ran over the course of two days at Highland Middle School. The first session was Thursday afternoon, and the second session was Saturday morning.

"I hope that everyone involved feels it was a productive endeavor. I went out there and was very impressed with the number of people," said Highland Mayor Joe Michaelis. "Hopefully, people find employment and it also helps out the local businesses."

Fairgoers had the opportunity to talk face to face with 10 Highland employers and turn in applications. Companies represented at the job fair

included: Basler Electric, Cooper B-Line, EF Express trucking, Gateway Cylinder Technologies, Highland Machine, Korte & Luitjohan Contractors, Smurfit-Stone Container Co., Tri-onics, TMCI Inc. and Trouw Nutrition.

Positions open ranged from unskilled assembly jobs to high-tech engineer and sales.

"You had people looking for entry-level positions, but also there were some upper level positions. So it was kind of a broad section of people who came in," Dunstan said.

Staff from Madison County's Employment and Training Program were also on hand to help people match their skill sets with other available jobs in the area.

The success of the job fair has the city and county thinking other job fairs may be in order.

"It worked out very well, and I wouldn't doubt we would do it again," said Rob Bowman, event chairman for the Highland Economic and Development Commission. "I don't know if this is a thing where you can go back to the well too many times, but I would think you could do it at least once per year - maybe twice. And we could always target other industries, too."



**JOB FAIR** – Madison County Board Member Judy Kuhn (R-Highland) and County Board Chairman Alan Dunstan (D-Troy) talk with Madison County Employment and Training Department program operations manager Barb Whitworth during the job fair Thursday afternoon.