

Career Builders

By Mary-Alane Wiltse

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

Labor Market Information is defined as all the facts that help to bring about the match between employers looking for workers and workers looking for jobs and careers. It helps explain the complexity of our economy and can provide details about events across town, throughout the state, or in another country. Labor market information can provide you with the facts necessary to make informed choices.

The internet has made access to all of this information very easy to find. Some of the information is just fun to know and can help you impress your friends with the knowledge you have of our community. Some of the information can be helpful to business managers in dealing with their human resource issues. Other information is important to job seekers and people setting future career goals.

Here are some basic facts about our two counties that I found from links available on our website, which is sponsored by the Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties:

- There are over 2,638 businesses in the two counties. Over 75% of these businesses have less than 10 employees. Eighteen businesses have over 250 employees.
- In 2005, the per capita income in Columbia County was \$30,264, ranking it 18 among all 62 counties in the state. In Greene County, the per capita income was \$26,713, ranking it 35th in the state.
- Three quarters of the people who work in our two counties also live here. More people from Albany County come to Greene County to work than come from Columbia County. However, Columbia County gets most of their out-of-county workers from Greene County.
- Thirteen percent of all employed people, who live in Columbia or Greene County, work in Albany County.
- Four percent of employed people, who live in Columbia or Greene County, work in New York City and the surrounding metro area.
- Close to 20% of all workers in our two counties, work for government, at either the local, state or federal level.

Besides just providing some interesting details about the place we live, labor market information can also be a useful business or job seeking tool. For example, it is easy to find out that in 2005 there were 79 manufacturing companies in Columbia County, employing over 2000 people. You can learn that if you employ machinists, or are a machinist looking for work, that the local starting salary is \$12.70 per hour. Experienced workers are paid around \$16.60 per hour. You can also quickly learn that there are less than 10 machinists locally looking for a job, but there are over 50 machinists in Albany and Rensselaer counties available for work. Of course, this type of information is available for all local industries and occupations.

A really cool internet site is the occupational information network (o*net). This webpage provides detailed descriptions of thousands of jobs. You simply click on an occupational title and you get a list of the specific tasks performed on that job. You are also provided with information regarding the knowledge, skills, abilities and education

needed for that field. Human Resource Managers, or small business owners who wear many hats, can use this information to create customized job descriptions for their business. Job seekers can find this same site extremely useful when writing their resume.

The internet provides other important information for job seekers. The New York State Department of Labor is piloting a new technology called the Job Spidering project. Thousands of jobs from hundreds of on-line job posting sites can be accessed from this one webpage.

Besides job openings, the internet can help job seekers access the “hidden-job market”. For example, if you are interested in working in the advertising field, you can get a list of the names, addresses and phone numbers for 86 firms located in the Capital Region area. It also gives you the owner’s name and the number of employees that work there. Again, this research can be done for practically any occupation.

Valuable information is also available for people trying to decide what kind of work they want to do. There are websites where you can fill out questionnaires regarding your interests, abilities and previous experience. You will then get a listing of all the potential jobs that could meet your needs. You can research each of those careers in terms of pay scales, working conditions, the impact on your lifestyle, needed educational levels, career growth potential, and current and future availability. Moreover, if you find that you will need additional training, these websites will tell you about some schools that offer the education you want and provide information about financial aid resources that may be available. The career planning information available is truly amazing. It is a great tool for teenagers, career changers, and adults who are thinking of returning to the job market.

All of this labor market information, plus much more, is available through our website. Visit us online at www.columbiagreenevents.org.

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