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Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Cedar Point seeks workers

Ride park recruits Mich. young adults to fill 5,000 spots

Jennifer Youssef / The Detroit News

Cedar Point officials are pumping up their recruitment of Michigan college students, with visits to three times as many state campuses this year as they hunt for nearly 5,000 summer workers.

The seasonal workers will operate rides, serve concessions and keep the park running smoothly for the 3 million visitors who will start pouring in May 10.

Recruiters have already been to 10 Michigan campuses and plan to stop by five more before the Sandusky, Ohio, amusement park opens. Last year, officials went to five colleges.

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The campus visits are a good way to recruit students who will likely have a hard time finding summer jobs in a state where the unemployment rate stands at 7.6 percent, said Cedar Point Director of Public Relations Robin Innes.

"We want to reach out to as many people as we can," Innes said. Campus tours "give us a chance to meet employees face to face."

Most of the Cedar Point jobs pay \$7 an hour, plus a 35-cent-an-hour bonus for good performers. Workers 16 and younger start at \$5.80 an hour.

Although 4,000 positions are being advertised, the park will hire closer to 5,000 workers during the summer as not all employees can work for the entire

season, Innes said.

Among the jobs available are park cleanup, directing traffic and working at the ticket booths

So far, the park has received 4,500 applications for summer jobs, which is 25 percent more than the number of applications it had received last year at this time, he said.

By the time summer arrives, Innes expects the amusement park will get 15,000 applications, about 20 percent to 25 percent from Michigan residents.

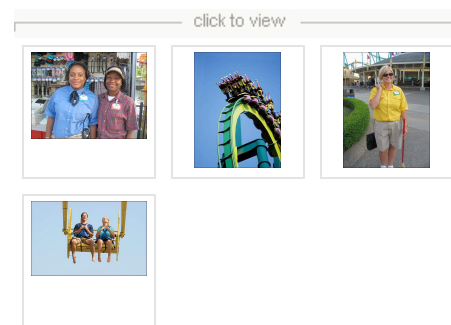
When the economy is weak, more workers tend to apply to earn some extra money, he said.

The summer unemployment rate for teens and young adults in Michigan, which typically is double that of the general population, will be high again this year, said Bruce Weaver, an economic analyst for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

In 2006 -- the last data available -- the jobless rate in Michigan was 7 percent; for those ages 20 to 24, it was 11.4 percent and for teens 16 to 19 years old, it was 19 percent.



Cedar Point expects about 15,000 applications this year, with 20 percent from Michigan residents, to fill 5,000 summer jobs. (Photos courtesy of Cedar Point)



Extras

How to apply

Cedar Point is hiring about 5,000 workers this summer. Two more interview sessions are planned:

Where: At the park's Breaker's Express Hotel, 1201 Cedar Point Drive, Sandusky, Ohio
When: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 5

Jobs available: Ride operators, food services, hotel positions, retail, marina dockhands, lifeguard, parking and toll attendants and more
Pay: \$7 an hour for workers 17 and older, \$5.80 for workers under 16, plus bonuses

"It lends some credence to the fact that difficulty finding a job is more acute for young adults than the general public," Weaver said. "The competition for jobs is substantial."

Knowing that, Cedar Point officials decided to make more of an effort to recruit Michigan college students, Innes said.

Job atmosphere enjoyable

The summer recreation job fair at Central Michigan University drew 90 employers, including Cedar Point, and about 1,000 potential employees from the college and the community, said Dean Wallin, director of the Center for Leisure Services who organized the event.

Michael Ott of Rochester Hills, who is earning his master's degree in education at the University of Detroit Mercy, is eager to start his fifth year as a ride supervisor at the amusement park this summer.

He has worked at other establishments in Michigan, but none of them has been as much fun as Cedar Point, where he is earning \$9 an hour.

"I love that it's such a team atmosphere," he said. "Everybody out there is willing to help."

You can reach Jennifer Youssef at (313) 222-2319.

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To apply: Potential employees are encouraged to apply online at www.cedarpoint.com
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