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MICHIGAN

Long-term unemployed face challenges

Report: Employees longer out of work face bias

By Charles Crumm
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Last September, Sheryl Stevenson lost her contract job as a hazardous waste specialist at Detroit Arsenal after seven years.

Before that, she had spent seven years as part of the man-

agement team at Northland Mall. "For 14 years, I didn't have to look for employment," said Stevenson, from Oak Park. "I had been employed for so many years, it was a new experience for me to be out there searching for another job."

She went through the state's Michigan Works! program while

looking for another job.

"They provided me the resources to improve my resume," Stevenson said. "I didn't have internet access at home. I was able to use their facilities to research job opportunities and to get leads with various employers."



Stevenson

Married with children, her 20 weeks of state unemployment benefits eventually ran out.

"It definitely got tight," she said. "I never thought to be out of work for that length of time."

But in April, some seven months later, persistence led to a job with Walker Miller Energy in Detroit, where she is a project manager. "It's just a wonderful place to work," Stevenson said.

Most of the success stories of

formerly laid-off and displaced workers are listed by their first names on the Michigan Works! website.

Despite the successes, a recent report from the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Labor looking at long-term unemployment indicates many more are still looking for work, long after they've exhausted state unemployment benefits.

CHALLENGE » PAGE 4

PONTIAC

OLHSA PROGRAM TEACHES JOB SKILLS, HARVESTS MATERIALS



ANNE RUNKLE — THE OAKLAND PRESS

Brandon Shirlee of Pontiac works on the interior of a long-vacant building on West Huron near the former Pontiac Central High School. Shirlee is one of 10 workers who are learning job skills while harvesting wood, tile and more from aging buildings to sell in the vintage building materials market.

Vintage materials can be resold

By Anne Runkle
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Everything old is new again for a Pontiac community service agency.

Under its Revive Pontiac program, Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency is salvaging building materials from long-vacant buildings to sell in the vintage materials market.

Ten workers who are learning job skills in a 12-week program recently joined elected officials who have supported the program at a ribbon-cutting ceremony

at a former storefront and apartment building slated for demolition at 330 W. Huron.

"You can't buy 100-year-old oak anymore," said Ron Borngesser, OLHSA chief executive officer, as he explained the value of harvesting materials from the building, which dates to 1920. It has been vacant for about three decades and had recently been home to squatters, he said.

OLHSA is working in cooperation with Architectural Salvage Warehouse of Detroit, a nonprofit organization that promotes the environmental advantages of diverting reusable

building materials from landfills, as well as the job training benefits.

Enrollees in Revive Pontiac make \$14 per hour and receive classroom and on-the-job training. They finish the program with several certifications that make them employable in the construction and demolition trades. They also receive financial education and other life skills. OLHSA will begin another session for new enrollees later this summer; Revive Pontiac can take up to 12 students at a time.

OLHSA is working with the city of Pontiac to identify other buildings that may be a good fit for the program.

Profits from the sale of materials will help OLHSA continue to provide services to the community and will make Revive Pontiac self-sustaining. Currently, it is funded by a \$150,000 grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner says the county acquired the building through tax foreclosure.

Meisner is a big proponent of "deconstruction," the harvesting of materials, because it identifies alternative uses for buildings that have long sat vacant.

"Deconstruction is demolition's smarter cousin," he said.
PROGRAM » PAGE 4

ROCHESTER

Art & Apples planned for weekend after Labor Day

By Nicole M. Robertson
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Nearly 300 artists from across the country are expected to participate in this year's Art & Apples Festival, scheduled for Friday, Sept. 9 through Sunday, Sept. 11, according to The Paint Creek Center for the Arts.

The event is the largest annual fundraiser for the nonprofit art association at the Rochester Municipal Park, 400 Sixth St., in downtown Rochester.

Recognized as one of the largest juried fine art fairs in the region, Art & Apples Festival offers fine art, live entertainment, children's activities, food vendors, interactive exhibits and fresh apple treats. More than 200,000 people are expected to attend.

"Art has a profound impact on who we are as human beings," Tami Salisbury, executive director of Paint Creek Center for the Arts, said in a release. "Our panel of jurors has painstakingly identified the very top artists from across the country and brought them together for one weekend only. From original contemporary to classical fine art, there will be

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PHOTO COURTESY OF PAINT CREEK CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Children contribute to a community painting in the Kids Zone at a past Art & Apples.

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CLARKSTON

Fourth of July Parade in Clarkston to feature Air Force flyover

The Fourth of July parade in Clarkston will feature a flyover of Air Force A-10 planes from Selfridge Air National Guard.

The parade, themed "Home of the Free because of the Brave," will also fea-

ture veterans from World War II, the Korean War and the Gulf War.

The Planets Peanut Mobile will be in attendance, as will Karen Newman singing the national anthem at 90 N. Main and

downtown Clarkston.

The parade begins at 10 a.m. Monday, July 4, at Saint Daniel Catholic Church.

It will head to M-15 and Church Street, and end at the Renaissance High

School.

Afterwards, look for photos of the parade on Media.TheOaklandPress.com.

— Staff writer Brian Johnston



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOETTE KUNSE

The Peanut Mobile will be in the Clarkston parade.



RAY SKOWRONEK — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Darlene Maynor of Sterling Heights has been unemployed for over 18 months. She is currently looking for employment in customer service in the manufacturing sector. In the background is Michigan Works!'s Chris Reilly, director, Macomb/St. Clair employment and training agency.

Challenge

FROM PAGE 1

The report defines long-term unemployment as looking for work 27 weeks or more.

Long-term unemployed

In Michigan, an estimated 85,000 people — about a third of the state's unemployed workers — have been looking longer than 27 weeks and qualify as long-term unemployed.

Worse, the report indicates a structural change in unemployment in Michigan since the year 2000, when just one in 20 qualified as long-term unemployed.

"While this is under levels registered during the Great Recession, it is quite elevated from 2000 levels, when only 1 in 20 of the unemployed were long-term unemployed," the report noted.

Among the report's other observations and conclusions:

- The average weeks a person is unemployed grew from 19 in 2006 to 31.7 in 2015, both above the national average.

- Michigan and the U.S. have displayed relatively similar trends over the past fifteen years in the share of unemployed who are long-term unemployed.

- A major difference between the two is in the gender distribution of the long-term unemployed. Michigan men make up nearly two thirds, while at a national level men comprise just over half.

- Occupational groups more associated with long-term unemployment include management, business and financial, production, and office and administrative support.

- Demand in each occupational group is present, both today and in the future. However, in order for long-term unemployed individuals to turn an opportunity into a job they will need to be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and education each occupational group requires.

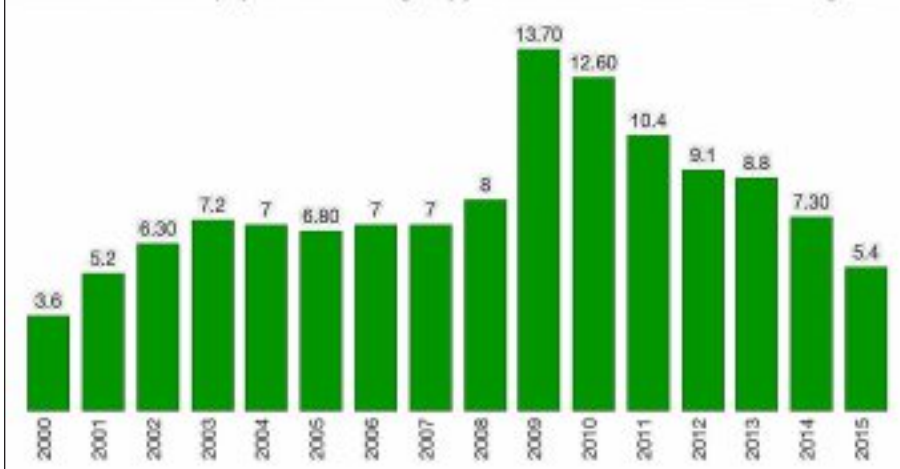
- There's a bias, perhaps unconscious, against hiring workers who have been idled too long.

Despite low official unemployment rates — less than 5 percent across Michigan — there are people unemployed long-term all over the state.

Jennifer Llewellyn, manager of Oakland County

Michigan Unemployment

The annual official unemployment rate in Michigan by year since a low was reached in 2000 through 2015.



Source: Michigan Labor Market Information

CHARLES CRUMM — THE OAKLAND PRESS

Michigan's official annual unemployment rate since 2000.

Workforce Development, said the goal of Michigan Works! and other programs is to break down barriers to getting another job.

Those barriers can include an illness or disability, time off for family rearing, veterans returning from military service, and a mismatch between skills employers are looking for, in addition to job losses in changing or declining occupations, or economic downturns.

"Obviously, Oakland's economy is very robust right now. The U rate is 3.9 percent for May," Llewellyn said. "That's a positive sign."

"However, we know there are individuals who are long-term unemployed or structurally unemployed due to barriers," she said. "Our system is focused on helping individuals remove those barriers and working with businesses to help people get back to work."

The road back to work isn't always an easy one. It may include upgrading skills, or taking on internships or temporary work to rebuild a resume.

"We try to overcome that misperception that because someone has been out of work six months or three years," Llewellyn said.

Training

Also engaged in matching workers to jobs is the Michigan New Jobs Training Program through Michigan community colleges.

The program allows community colleges to provide free training for employers who create new jobs or expanding operations in Michigan. The training for the newly hired workers is paid by capturing the state income tax associated with



RAY SKOWRONEK — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Michigan Works! in Roseville.

new employees' wages.

Job vacancies are there. The challenge, according to many businesses, is finding workers with the right skills.

That was also the conclusion of Business Leaders for Michigan in an April report that concluded the state could face more vacancies for high-skill, high-wage occupations three years from now.

"High-paying jobs—the ones that require more education and training — are going to continue growing in Michigan in the near term while low-skill, low-wage jobs are expected to contract," said Doug Rothwell, BLM president and CEO in the report. "However, most of the jobs in Michigan are still low-skill and low-wage."

Rothwell said annual openings for low-skill occupations currently outpace openings for high-skill jobs, but expects that to change.

"This is going to change soon, however, as jobs requiring only a high school diploma are expected to drop by more than 19,000," Rothwell said. "Conversely, jobs requiring an associ-

ate's degree or higher are expected to grow by 21,000 — the beginning of a trend that is going to grow exponentially in the years ahead."

A similar sentiment was issued by University of Michigan economists at Oakland County's annual economic outlook luncheon, also in April.

The economists forecast a 7.1 percent growth in high skill high wage jobs paying \$75,000 or more a year between 2015 and 2018, but a 5.5 percent growth in mid-wage jobs paying \$35,000-\$75,000, and a 6.5 percent growth in low wage jobs paying \$35,000 or less.

Highly paid jobs in fields like engineering, computers, science and management are projected to make up more than a quarter of the estimated 44,153 new jobs forecast in Oakland County through 2018.

Stevenson has some advice for people who find themselves suddenly looking for work, which she puts on the bottom of her emails.

"Just Because You're Discouraged It Doesn't Give You The Right to Quit"

Apples

FROM PAGE 1

creations to inspire everyone's palate."

Organizers of Art & Apples have worked to bring more diverse than in past years, with new and returning artists working in ceramics, textiles, leather, painting, photography, sculpture, wood, digital art, drawing, mixed media, printmaking, metal, jewelry, and glass.

Sunshine Artist magazine, the art and craft show industry's leading publication for exhibitors, promoters and patrons ranks the festival 15th among art shows throughout in the country.

Apples, entertainment and more

After a year hiatus, the Apple Pie & Dessert Baking contest will return to the 51st year of the Art & Apples Festival. Festival patrons will have an opportunity to pay a small entry fee and submit a baked apple pie or dessert to be judged by a hungry celebratory taste-testing panel.

A variety of fresh apple treats, such as strudel, streusel and caramel apples, will be available

for purchase.

This year the festival will introduce Art & Apples "On The Go." The traveling artist exhibit will appear at local businesses to offer patrons a peek at the artists' works at venues across Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties.

The Meijer Kids Art Zone returns to offer a free weekend of activities, creativity and exploration for children of all ages. Also returning is Oakland County Parks and Recreation and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

A new high-energy line-up of stage performers, musicians and dancers is planned for the festival's Main Stage. The line-up is expected to be released in late July.

A suggested \$5 tax-deductible donation per person at each entrance to the festival provides funding for PCCA, which works year-round to promote the arts and artistic excellence through art education, exhibitions, an art market, outreach programs and more.

Sponsorships are still available. For more information about Paint Creek Center for the Arts or the Art & Apples Festival, visit pccart.org or call 248-651-4110.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAINT CREEK CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The 51st annual Art & Apples festival, benefiting the Paint Creek Center for the Arts, will be Sept. 9-11.

Program

FROM PAGE 1

"What we heard again and again with buildings like this is, 'This just isn't marketable.'"

He said older buildings can be costly to renovate because of modern

requirements on hallway widths, stair step rise and other regulations.

Materials salvaged from buildings, such as wood, marble, electrical fixtures and tile, can be found on sale at revivopontiac.org and in a store at 125 Saginaw St. in Pontiac.

**City of
ROCHESTER HILLS**
1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills, Michigan 48309-3033

NOTICE OF MEETING

In accordance with Section 211.53b of the Michigan General Property Tax Laws, the City of Rochester Hills Board of Review will meet Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 3:00 pm at the City of Rochester Hills Offices, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills, Oakland County, Michigan 48309.

The purpose of this meeting is to correct clerical errors or mutual mistakes of fact for 2015 and 2016, review poverty exemption appeals for 2016, review principal residence exemption status relative to the 2013 through the 2016 assessment years and correct the property transfer status 2013 through the 2016 assessment years.

Kurt A. Dawson, Director
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City of Rochester Hills
248 656-4605

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