

Scanner

News Beat

Job fair held for 100 displaced employees

PICA held a job fair on December 13 for about 100 displaced employees from two Charlotte-area printing companies that closed recently due to consolidation.

Several individuals who read about the job fair in The Charlotte Observer and called to see if they could participate were also included. This is the third job fair PICA has held for its members and in each case it has been for companies consolidating multiple locations.

Over 25 companies throughout the membership interviewed potential employees at the job fair, held at the PICA Education and Conference Center in Charlotte, NC.

The displaced workers were from Craftsman Printing and Performance Printing. Job fairs are made available to closing PICA members to assist their employees in finding new employment elsewhere within the Carolinas' printing industry.

"Although this isn't a regular member service, it is an important opportunity PICA provides to not only the company affected, but also to other members looking to hire skilled personnel," said Carrie Epps, PICA's Director of Member Services, who organized the event. Approximately 100 potential candidates were interviewed for positions ranging from press operators, prepress technicians, customer service and sales representatives to bindery. In an industry where skilled, qualified candidates are



difficult to find, the fact that 100 could be interviewed in one day in one location was extremely beneficial to the participants.

"The job fair was both a direct and indirect benefit to our company," said Miles Wright, president of Walker-Ross Printing in Rocky Mount, NC and Eyebeam in Raleigh. "First and foremost, we seldom ever get the opportunity to meet so many talented graphic arts professionals in one place. We interviewed estimators and pressmen who have many years of experience."

For the employees, the benefits were obvious — they were able to interview up to two dozen companies seeking new employees. "If we can help one person find employment with another company, then the event was worthwhile," said Epps.

The Job Fair gave employers and candidates alike the opportunity to meet for the first interview. "While it's a little early to determine who and how many folks we might hire, pending follow-up interviews, we believe there were several good candidates who would strengthen

our company," said Wright.

For the closing companies, the job fair gave them a chance to show their employees what opportunities exist in the industry. For many of Craftsman's employees, said Donna Rhodes, Craftsman's Process Manager who is charge of closing the plant and facilitating the transition to State Printing in Columbia, this was the first time they had had to look for a new position elsewhere in decades. "The job fair gave them a realistic view of what the graphics community had to offer outside their own company," she said. "It helped us in our internal recruiting efforts [for the employees] to stay within the Wallace network and helped them to commit one way or another." Wallace owns Craftsman and State Printing, to which many employees were offered transfers.

"PICA's organizing and sponsoring of the recent job fair is precisely the type of proactive effort our industry needs during these difficult times. It was a benefit not only to the men and women looking for jobs but also the

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The PICA Foundation is celebrating its 40th year of operations in 2002.

National environmental conference in Raleigh6

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Events directly influence students; more planned for coming months.

Economic Security and Recovery Act partially meets PIA aims7

PIA is supporting passage of the Economic Security and Recovery Act of 2001.

Upcoming Events

February

1: PrintForce/Graphic Communications Career Awareness Student Event. Hickory, NC.

7, 14, 21: Supervisory Training Level 1. Charlotte, NC

8, 15, 22: Supervisory Training Level 1. Greensboro, NC.

9: PICA Awards Banquet. Grandover Resort. Greensboro, NC.

March

4-8: GASF Sales Institute. Charlotte, NC.

5, 12: Supervisor Training Level Two. Charlotte, NC.

7: NC Skills USA/VICA Contest. Charlotte, NC.

17-20: National Environmental Health & Safety Conference. Raleigh, NC.

21-22: Phoenix Challenge, International High School Flexographic Skills Competition. Central Piedmont Community College SW Campus. Charlotte, NC.

For more industry events, see **Hot Type** on page 2 or log onto www.picanet.org

PICA to sponsor 5th annual Phoenix Challenge

The Printing Industry of the Carolinas, Inc. (PICA) has announced its sponsorship of the 5th annual Phoenix Challenge, the high school flexographic skills competition.

The competition will be held March 21-22, 2002 at the Harper National Flexographic Center at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC. PICA was the first association to sponsor the Phoenix Challenge four years ago and has continued ever since.

Students from around the United States and Canada will compete during the two-day event which tests students' flexo skills in the areas of prepress, platemaking, written knowledge and press operation. More than 10 schools are expected to compete in the 2002 competition, making it the biggest Phoenix Challenge in history.

PICA and the Flexographic Technical Association (FTA), based in Ronkonkoma, NY, are the two Association Sponsors for the event. The competition has sponsorship opportunities still available.

Education has always been a large portion of PICA's mission. PICA has supported educational competitions for major printing processes throughout the years, such as the SkillsUSA/VICA competitions, the Phoenix Challenge, and the student division of the PICA Awards, which

has offset, flexo and screen printing categories for secondary and post-secondary schools. The PICA Foundation, the educational arm of PICA, also distributes scholarships to students at two-year and four-year colleges and universities and sponsors the SkillsUSA/VICA competitions.

"PICA's sponsorship of the Phoenix Challenge shows their commitment to education, not only in the Carolinas, but to the entire Flexo Industry," said Jack McEntee, vice president and general manager of CL&D Graphics in Rock Hill, SC. He is the chairman of the PICA Flexo Services Committee. "Because of this commitment, the Phoenix Challenge will continue to grow. It will stay as the pinnacle forum for the Flexo in High School program, a place where students and instructors can come to hone their skills. PICA and FTA's support of the Phoenix Challenge will enable us to continue our mission to refine training standards and develop measurement systems that can be used as a barometer to improve flexo education."

Because PICA and FTA have a strategic alliance in which flexographic printers can join both organizations for one dues rate, the flexographic segment of the printing industry has become a focus for PICA's membership recruitment efforts. Through this alliance, regional FTA technical seminars will be offered to printers throughout the Carolinas as well as specific products, programs and services designed specifically for the flexographic printing process.



PICA president Richard Spencer, left, presents the Best of the Best Workplace in America award to Bryan Hall of Graphic Printing Services, center, as Hall's father, Tom Hall, looks on.

3 Carolina firms receive national human relations recognition

Three Carolina printing firms have been recognized by a national industry group for their superb human relations programs.

Master Printers of America, a committee of the Printing Industries of America, has awarded one top honor and two second-place to three PICA members in the Best Workplace in America program.

Graphic Printing Services, Inc. received the top honor, "Best of the Best" in the program. Located in Greensboro, NC, they are a combination commercial offset and flexographic printing firm.

Flexographic printer CL&D Graphics, Inc., based in

Wisconsin with a production facility in Rock Hill, SC, received the "Best Workplace in America" award.

Classic Graphics, Inc., a commercial offset printing company, also received the "Best Workplace in America" distinction.

A total of 95 graphic arts companies nationwide were recognized as recipients of the 2001 Best Workplace in America awards. Entries are judged on the work environment and organizational culture, training and development opportunities, financial security, personal/work-life balance, recognition and rewards, and health and well-being programs.