

Employers See Decline In Employment Outlook Survey

Durham area employers anticipate a decline in the level of new hiring activity during the coming three months (July, August, September) from the pace of one year ago, according to a quarterly survey conducted by Manpower, the world's largest temporary help firm.

Bill Williams, owner of Manpower's Durham office, said, "Manpower's survey indicates that employers here are following national and regional patterns in their anticipation of a slump in employment levels. Overall, 27% of the employers polled project hiring plans, seventeen per cent anticipate staff reduction, 53% expect no change and three per cent are unsure of their plans," Williams said.

In a similar survey conducted by Manpower one year ago, 33% of the employers projected hiring plans, ten per cent were considering reductions and 57% expected no change.

Decreased employment levels are anticipated in public agencies, wholesale-retail outlets and public utilities. The services sector, construction, financial institutions and manufacturers of durable and non-durable goods project increased employment levels.

Nationally, a sharp drop in anticipated hiring plans is registered by the survey. Of the more than 8,000 employers polled, nineteen per cent plan to hire additional workers during the July through September period, down from the 29% recorded for the comparable quarter one year ago. Another seventeen per cent foresee staff reductions, up sharply from the seven per cent recorded in 1979.

No changes are currently planned by sixty per cent with four per cent of the respondents undecided. One year ago, 61% planned no changes and three per cent were uncertain.

These findings are the lowest third quarter staff additions recorded in the past four years, while the report of reductions is higher than in any previous survey. For the past four quarters the survey results have shown

a progressive slowdown in the pace of new hiring, and the latest outlook indicates an even sharper decrease during the summer months ahead.

Reduced Expectation Noted For All Sectors

Reduction in expected new employment are noted for all regions of the country, and all sectors of the economy.

The number of heavy industry employers expecting staff reductions, 25%, outweighs those planning increases, 15%. Of the remainder, 56% foresee no change in current levels and 4% are undecided.

More public administration employers also plan reductions than expect additions: 17% anticipate increases, down from 30% one year ago, while 19% foresee reductions, up sharply from 7% in 1979. Currently, 59% plan no changes, the same as last year, and 5% are now undecided, similar to the 4% of one year ago.

In the education sector, an expected seasonal decline combined with declining student population results in reduced employment opportunities for teachers. Increases are planned by 15% of the respondents, 56% foresee no changes and 24% anticipate reductions. Five per cent are uncertain. These results parallel those of one year ago, when 19% forecast increases, 55% no changes and 25% declines.

Mining-White Collar Sectors More Resistant

While posting lower levels of anticipated hiring than one year ago, employers in the services and mining sectors indicate a moderate resistance to workforce reductions. During the past year, these two sectors have shown the least decline in employment activity.

Of the mining employers polled, 23% forecast increases in staff, down from 37%; and 64% foresee no changes in present levels, up from the 49% of 1979. The surveys for both periods indicate 11% plan staff reductions, while 22 are currently undecided. These projections are the lowest recorded at this time in the four-year history of the survey.

Services employers now project only marginal new hiring activity producing the lowest projection recorded for this quarter during the past four years. New hirings are planned by 25%, off from the 31%, while 63% now up from 60%, plan no change. Nine per cent forecast staff reduction, up from 6%, while 3% in each survey are undecided.

Depressed Hiring Activity Among Trades Employers

Employers in the wholesale-retail and building trades project lackluster opportunities for the third quarter, significantly below those recorded at this time previously.

Construction employers, with already trimmed crews, expect few new opportunities, counter to normal seasonal trends. Of those polled, 25% plan increases, well below the 42% of one year ago, while 20% expect reductions, significantly above the 7% of 1979. Fifty per cent foresee no changes, similar to the 48% of one year ago, while the balance of each sample are undecided.

Relatively few merchants, 17% of those polled, project additions to staff, while another 14% anticipate staff reductions. Of the balance, 65% foresee no changes and 4% are uncertain. One year ago, merchants were decidedly more optimistic: 25% projected increases, only 8% posted declines and 63% planned no changes.

Similar results are recorded for the non-durable goods manufacturing sector, with the number of employers projecting staff, reduction approaching those planning additions. Of those polled, 19% plan increases, down from 26%, while 16% foresee reductions, up sharply from 7%. The majority in each survey, 62% presently and 64% one year ago, expect no changes, with 3% uncertain of their plans.

Finance-Transportation Hiring Off Sharply

Employers in both the transportation-public utility and finance-real estate-insurance sectors project significantly few employment opportunities

Urges Black Presence In Engineering, Sciences

RALEIGH — There is a need to increase the black presence in the sciences and engineering fields by the year 2000, Dr. Lawrence M. Clark, assistant provost and affirmative action officer at North Carolina State University, said recently.

"There are not enough blacks in high technology areas," he told 80 high school sophomores on campus for a two-day conference aimed at introducing minorities to engineering educational opportunities.

Clark suggested that the way to accomplish this increase is to prepare young people "from K to 12."

"For you, the most important thing is what you do in the next three years," he said.

He encouraged the students representing high schools across the state to take all the sciences and mathematics courses they could.

"Play a little, but study a whole lot," he emphasized.

than at this time in previous years.

Twenty-one per cent of the transportation-public utility plan to hire additional workers during the next three months, down from 28%, while 15% anticipate staff reductions, up sharply from 7%. Sixty-one per cent in each survey plan no change, while 3% are now undecided.

Among finance-real estate-insurance employers, 19% now anticipate staff increases, off from 30% while 11% forecast reductions, up sharply from 6%. Sixty-eight per cent plan no changes, up from 61% one year ago, while 2% are now undecided.

Regionally, the sharpest drop in employment activity is measured for the Midwest, with its large concentration of heavy industry, particularly automobile related businesses.

There, the firms projecting staff reductions, 20% outnumber those planning increases, 15% of the regional sample. Year-ago results indicate increases planned by 28%, declines forecast by 9% and 61% planning no changes. The reminder in each survey were undecided.

A dramatic decrease in planned workforce additions is noted for the West, Northeast and South, with the latter two showing relatively greater resistance to employment reductions.

In the Northeast, 19% of the respondents plan to hire additional workers, off from the 25%, while 13% expect reductions, up sharply from 7%. Sixty-three per cent forecast no change in current levels, similar to 65% of 1979, while 5% are now uncertain.

The Manpower Employment Survey is a quarterly measurement of employer intentions for changes to the permanent workforce; during the past several years, it has been significantly indicative of employment changes. It is based upon interviews with more than 8,000 public and private employers in more than 250 cities throughout the United States. It is conducted immediately prior to June 1. Companion surveys are made in ten other Western countries and are reported separately.

Manpower, Inc. is the world's largest temporary help firm, annually providing employment to more than 600,000 people through its more than 800 offices in 31 countries. Office Services accounts for more than half of the jobs at which its temporary workforce is engaged.

The high school students are participants in the Minority Introduction to Engineering (MITE) program conducted each summer by the NCSU School of Engineering. They were selected to attend the program by their counselors and principals based on their interest in science and mathematics.

Clark noted that of 1,200 blacks enrolled at NCSU, approximately 250 are in engineering.

"At the turn of the century only 2,500 blacks in the nation had college degrees. Today there are one million blacks enrolled in college," he said.

He noted that the NCSU School of Engineering is "one of our giants in pushing forward

in terms of getting minorities to seek career opportunities in the engineering profession."

The MITE program is sponsored by the Engineers Council for Professional Development and supported with funds from North Carolina industries. Another two-day MITE program for 85 high school seniors gets underway Wednesday.

Later this month 80 high school juniors will arrive for a five-day MITE program.

This week also the School of Engineering will conduct a Conference on Engineering Careers for Women for approximately 120 high school women. The juniors and senior women will arrive Thursday for a two-day event.

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